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DEFENSE ATTACHE SAIGON: RVNAF FINAL ASSESSMENT, 1 JANUARY THRU --ETC(U)  
JUN 75 H D SMITH, M LAMONT

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## RVNAF FINAL ASSESSMENT JAN THRU APR FY 75

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APO San Francisco 96558

AOSOP-OR

15 June 1975

SUBJECT: Letter of Transmittal -- RVNAF Final Assessment

Commander  
U.S. Support Activities Group  
Nakhon Phanom, RTAFB  
Thailand

The attached final assessment is forwarded in compliance with JCS  
Secret message, 072105A March 1973, subject: Continuing SEA  
Reports (U).

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as

*Maximilian Lamont*  
MAXIMILIAN LAMONT  
Colonel, USAF  
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## DEFENSE ATTACHE'S

### FOREWORD AND ASSESSMENT

This is my third and, unfortunately, last assessment of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF). In my initial assessment, covering the first quarter of FY 75, I asked the question "At what price has the above [implementation of funding constraints] been accomplished?" I think it only fair at this time to say that the funding constraints materially contributed to the total defeat of RVNAF and surrender of the Government of South Vietnam to the North Vietnamese/Provisional Revolutionary Government.

There are those who will argue that RVNAF still had sufficient materiel to fight for several months. While that may have been true to a degree, the lack of any positive indication or, as time passed, any reason to hope for the materiel and moral support promised by senior representatives of the greatest nation on earth, the United States of America, broke their spirit. This, coupled with two tragic decisions, brought about their defeat--not on the battlefield, because they could and did fight well--but in the political arena that somehow, in the Vietnam War, had always managed to transcend the influence of military decisions.

This four-month "quarter" saw a massive invasion from the North, the end of the Republic of South Vietnam and the takeover by Communism of 20 million additional human beings.

This assessment by the Defense Attache Office, Saigon, records the final days of the United States' resistance to internal and external aggression in Indochina. Historians will long debate the fundamental developments leading to and forming the basis of the ill-fated American experience in South Vietnam. Whether or not the fundamental motivation was right or wrong, the United States had the capacity to achieve its objectives in Vietnam. This held true as late as thirty days before the fall of Saigon.

I do not intend to reiterate the whys and wherefores of the failure of the United States to do what it might have done. The decisions were political. Suffice to say, we simply did not carry out our part of the bargain insofar as the Paris Peace Accords of January 1973 were concerned. The South Vietnamese, admittedly with many failings of their own, paid the ultimate price--their freedom as a people and their existence as a sovereign nation.



H. D. SMITH  
Major General, USA  
Defense Attache

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This assessment is the final official written report of the Defense Attache Office (DAO), Saigon, Republic of Vietnam (RVN). It is the last in a series of assessments, previously submitted quarterly, since the activation of the DAO and represents the combined efforts of many people, military and civilian, who served as the last US Department of Defense presence in the RVN until the fall of that nation on 30 April 1975.

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## T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

	PAGE
INDEX OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	vi-xxiii
CHAPTER 1 - THREAT ASSESSMENT	
1. Introduction	1-1
2. North Vietnam	1-4
3. South Vietnam	1-7
CHAPTER 2 - FRIENDLY SITUATION	
1. General	2-1
2. Military Region 1	2-1
3. Military Region 2	2-2
4. Military Region 3	2-4
5. Military Region 4	2-5
CHAPTER 3 - RVNAF INTELLIGENCE CAPABILITIES	
1. RVNAF Joint General Staff (JGS), J2	3-1
2. Unit 306	3-1
3. Capital Military District (CMD)	3-3
4. Corps and Division G2's	3-4
5. Military Security Service (MSS)	3-5
6. Unit 101	3-6
7. Vietnamese Navy Intelligence	3-6
8. Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF)	3-8
9. Signal Intelligence (SIGINT)	3-9
10. Summary	3-9
CHAPTER 4 - RVNAF FORCE STRUCTURE	
1. General	4-1
2. Force Structure Changes	4-1
3. Planned Future Force Structure Changes	4-2
4. Changes During Late March and April	4-3
CHAPTER 5 - VIETNAMESE ARMY (ARVN)	
1. Authorized and Assigned Strength	5-1
2. Areas of Operation (AO)	5-1
3. Combat Arms	5-2
4. Supply/Logistics	5-24
5. Maintenance	5-28
6. Reconstitution of ARVN Forces	5-33

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	PAGE
7. Petroleum Oil and Lubricants (POL)	5-51
8. Port Operations	5-51
9. RVNAF Facilities Engineering Self-Sufficiency Program	5-52
10. ARVN Lines of Communication (LOC) Program	5-53
11. Special Category Army with Air Force (SCARWAF)	5-54
12. Retrograde Program	5-54
13. ARVN Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Program	5-54
14. Procurement	5-54
CHAPTER 6 - VIETNAMESE AIR FORCE (VNAF)	
1. Introduction	6-1
2. Authorized Strength and Assigned Personnel	6-1
3. VNAF Force Deployment	6-1
4. VNAF Aircraft Inventory	6-9
5. Major Equipment Status	6-10
6. Operations	6-20
7. Logistics	6-21
8. Contracts	6-27
9. Civil Engineering	6-28
10. Summary	6-30
CHAPTER 7 - VIETNAMESE NAVY (VNN)	
1. Logistics	7-1
2. Operations	7-2
CHAPTER 8 - VIETNAMESE MARINE CORPS (VNBC)	
1. General	8-1
2. The Marines' Withdrawal	8-1
3. Supplies and Equipment Lost and Destroyed	8-2
4. Action to Restore Combat Effectiveness	8-3
5. Evacuation	8-3
CHAPTER 9 - TERRITORIAL FORCES (TF)	
1. Territorial Forces	9-1
2. Regional Forces (RF)	9-1
3. Popular Forces (PF)	9-10
CHAPTER 10 - RVNAF COMMUNICATIONS-ELECTRONICS CAPABILITY	
1. Single Integrated Military (Telecommunications) Systems (SIMS)	10-1

# UNCLASSIFIED

	PAGE
2. Communications-Electronics (C-E) Self-Sufficiency	10-1
3. RVNAF JGS/J6 Reorganization	10-1
4. Selected C-E Evaluations	10-2
5. Logistics	10-5
6. Conclusion	10-12
CHAPTER 11 - REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM ARMED FORCES TRAINING	
1. Offshore Training	11-1
2. In-Country Training	11-4
3. In-Country English Language Training Program (ELTP)	11-11
4. Contract Training	11-11
5. Final Assessment of the RVNAF Training System	11-13
CHAPTER 12 - RVNAF PROGRAMS, PLANS AND MORALE	
1. Introduction	12-1
2. Statistics	12-1
3. Lines of Communications	12-2
4. Military Construction (MILCON)	12-2
5. RVNAF 1975 Retirement Plan	12-2
6. RVNAF Morale	12-2
7. RVNAF Medical Evacuation (MEDEVAC)	12-2
8. Chieu Hoi Program	12-2
9. Terrorism	12-2
10. Refugee Program	12-2
11. Conclusion	12-2
CHAPTER 13 - JGS COMMAND AND CONTROL	
1. Command and Control	13-1
2. Central Logistic Command	13-1
3. RVNAF Logistic Channels	13-2
4. JGS J6 and Telecommunications Command	13-2
CHAPTER 14 - DAO DISTINGUISHED VISITORS	
1. January 1975	14-1
2. February 1975	14-5
3. March 1975	14-9
4. April 1975	14-11

# UNCLASSIFIED

	PAGE
CHAPTER 15 - EVACUATION OF MILITARY REGIONS 1 and 2	
1. General	15-1
2. Evacuation of Military Region 1	15-1
3. Evacuation of Military Region 2	15-2
4. Personal Observations on Evacuation of MR's 1 and 2	15-3
CHAPTER 16 - EVACUATION OF SAIGON	
SECTION A - INTRODUCTION	16-A-1
1. General	16-A-1
2. Chronology	16-A-1
SECTION B - OBSERVATIONS OF THE DEFENSE ATTACHE	16-B-1
SECTION C - OBSERVATIONS OF THE SERVICE ATTACHES	16-C-1
1. Excerpts from the Report of Colonel Charles G. F. Wahle, US Army, Assistant Defense Attache/Army Attache	16-C-1
2. Excerpts from the Report of Colonel Garvin McCurdy, US Air Force, Air Attache	16-C-8
3. Excerpts from the Report of Captain Cornelius J. Carmody, Jr., US Navy, American Legation US Naval Attache	16-C-17
SECTION D - SPECIAL PLANNING GROUP ACTIVITIES	16-D-1
1. General	16-D-1
2. DAO Complex Preparation, "Project ALAMO"	16-D-2
3. Security Program, DAO Compound and Annex	16-D-11
4. Air Extraction from Metropolitan Saigon	16-D-12
5. Surface Extraction from Metropolitan Saigon	16-D-25
SECTION E - CONTROL, COORDINATION, COMMUNICATIONS AND EXECUTION OF SEALIFT AND AIRLIFT OPERATIONS	16-E-1
1. The Evacuation Control Center (ECC)	16-E-1
2. Communications	16-E-4
3. Sealift Operations	16-E-8
4. Fixed Wing Airlift Operations	16-E-10

# UNCLASSIFIED

	PAGE
SECTION F - PERSONNEL PROCESSING	16-F-1
1. Processing of Evacuees from the Northern Provinces	16-F-1
2. Processing of Saigon Evacuees	16-F-1
3. Operation of the DAO Annex Evacuation Processing Center	16-F-3
SECTION G - MOVEMENT OF SENSITIVE VIETNAMESE NATIONALS	16-G-1
1. General	16-G-1
2. Special Missions	16-G-2
3. Lessons Learned	16-G-3
4. Excerpts from the Report of Colonel A. P. Hodges, US Army, Chief, Operations and Training Branch, Operations and Plans Division, DAO	16-G-4
SECTION H - OPERATION TALON VISE/FREQUENT WIND	16-H-1
1. Excerpts from the Report of Lieutenant Colonel Thomas G. Tobin, US Air Force, Chief, Plans Section, Operations and Plans Division, DAO	16-H-1
2. Text of CTG 79.1 Message 021510Z May 75	16-H-2
3. One Final Look	16-H-17

v  
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## INDEX OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AAA	Antiaircraft Artillery
AAD	ARVN (Army, Republic of Vietnam) Associated Depot
AAVSCOM	Army Aviation Support Command (United States)
AB	Air Base
ABCCC	Airborne Battlefield Command and Control Center
ABF	Attack(s) by Fire
ABN	Airborne
AB&T	Alaska Barge and Transport, Inc.
A/C	Aircraft
ACC	Army Calibration Center
ACO	Administrative Contracting Officer
ACS	Armored Cavalry Squadron
AC&W	Aircraft Control and Warning
AD	Air Defense
ADF	Automatic Direction Finder
ADMIN	Administration
AESF	Amphibious Evacuation Security Force
AF	Air Force
AFB	Air Force Base
AFLC	Air Force Logistics Command (United States)
AFSC	Air Force Specialty Code
AG	Adjutant General
AGE	Aerospace Ground Equipment
AGP	Auxiliary General Purpose

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8

AID	Agency for International Development
AIMI	Aviation Intensively Managed Items
AIRA	Air Attache
ALC	Area Logistic Command
ALUSNA	American Legation United States Naval Attache
AM	Amplitude Modulation
AMC/PAC	Army Materiel Command/Pacific Area Command
AMSF-V	Area Maintenance Supply Facility-Vietnam
AO	Areas of Operation
APC	Air Photo Center/Armored Personnel Carrier
ARL	Landing Craft Repair Ship
ARMA	Army Attache
ARTY	Artillery
ARVN	Army, Republic of Vietnam
ASC	Army Supply Center
ASGN/ASGD	Assign/Assigned
ASL	Authorized Stockage List
ATC	Air Training Command
ATLC	Air Technical Logistics Command
AUTH	Authorized
AUTOVON	Automatic Voice Network
AVGAS	Aviation Gasoline
B-3 FRONT	Battlefront in the Central Highlands
BBL	Barrel(s)
BCE	Base Civil Engineer/Engineering

viii

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BDE	Brigade
BG/BGEN	Brigadier General
BLSG	Brigade Logistic Support Group
BLT	Battalion Landing Team
BMT	Ban Me Thuot
BN	Battalion
BOBS	Beacon only Bombing System-Seek Point
BOQ	Bachelor Officers Quarters.
BTRY	Battery
CAPT	Captain, United States Navy
CAV	Cavalry
CBD	Crash Battle Damage
CBS	Columbia Broadcasting System
C&CP	Collection and Classification Point
CCT	Combat Control Team
CDR	Commander (USN)
C-E	Communications-Electronics
CETS	Contractor Engineering Technical Services
CG	Commanding General
CHD	Cablehead
CHMEDTC	Chief Military Equipment Delivery Team, Cambodia
CINCPAC	Commander in Chief, Pacific
C&L	Collection and Liaison
CLC	Central Logistics Command
CLG	Guided Missile Cruiser, Light

# UNCLASSIFIED

CMA	Communications Management Agency
CMD	Capital Military District
CNO	Chief of Naval Operations
CO	Company/Commanding Officer
CODEL	Congressional Delegation(s)
COFS	Chief of Staff
COL	Colonel
COMD	Command
COMM-ELECT	Communications-Electronics
COMSEVENTHFLT	Commander, Seventh Fleet
CONGEN	Consul General
CONPLAN	Contingency Plan
CONUS	Continental United States
COSVN	Central Office for South Vietnam
CPT	Captain (United States Army, Air Force and Marine Corps)
CRS	Course/Coastal Radar Site
CTC	Central Training Command
CTF	Commander, Task Force/Carrier Task Force
CTG	Commander, Task Group
CTX	Contacts
CVA	Attack Aircraft Carrier
CVAN	Attack Aircraft Carrier (Nuclear Propulsion)
CY	Calendar Year
D-1	Unit Designator for North Vietnamese Army Regiment
DA	Department of the Army (United States)

x

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DAO	Defense Attache Office
DASC	Direct Air Support Center
DATT	Defense Attache
DAV	Defense Assistance, Vietnam
DCA	Directorate/Director of Civil Aviation (South Vietnam)
DCA-PAC	Defense Communication Agency, Pacific Group
DCM	Deputy Chief of Mission
DCS	Defense Communications System
DER	Destroyer Escort Radar Picket
DEP DATT	Deputy Defense Attache
DFM	Diesel Fuel, Marine
DIFM	Due-in-for-Maintenance
DIV	Division
DLI	Defense Language Institute
DMZ	Demilitarized Zone
DOD	Department of Defense (United States)
DODIC	Department of Defense Identification Code
DOI	Director of Intelligence
DRV	Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam)
D/S	Direct Support
DSG	Direct Support Group(s)
DSU/GSU	Direct Support Unit/General Support Unit
DT-1	Unit Designator for North Vietnamese Army Regiment
DTC	Division Training Center
DTE	Dial Telephone Exchange

# UNCLASSIFIED

EAC	Emergency Action Console
EBD	Engineer Base Depot
ECC	Evacuation Control Center
ECCOI	Eastern Construction Company International
E&E	Emergency and Evacuation
EIUI	End Item Use Inspection(s)
ELT	English Language Training
ELTP	English Language Training Program
EM	Enlisted Man/Men
EN	Enemy
ENG	English/Engineer
ENGR	Engineer
EOD	Explosive Ordnance Disposal
EOQ	Equipment Order Quantity
EPC	Evacuation/Evacuee Processing Center
EVAC	Evacuation
FAA	Federal Aviation Agency
FEC	Federal Electric Corporation
FIN	Finance
FLN	Flown
FLT	Flight
FM	Frequency Modulation
FPJMT	Four Party Joint Military Team
FRD	Friendly
FSB	Fire Support Base

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FY Fiscal Year

G General (Staff): 1-Administration; 2-Intelligence;  
3-Operations; 4-Logistics; 5-Plans; 6-Communications-  
Electronics

GCA Ground Controlled Approach

GEN General

GFP Government Furnished Property

GP Group(s)

GR Government Representative

GSF Ground Security Force

GVN Government of Vietnam (South Vietnam)

H Time Zone for Saigon (i.e., 2000H)

HEL/HELO Helicopter

HF High Frequency

HF SSB High Frequency, Single Side Band

HHG Household Goods

HLS Helicopter Landing Site(s)

HLZ Helicopter Landing Zone(s)

HMS Her Majesty's Ship

HQ Headquarters

HUMINT Human Intelligence

ICCS International Commission of Control and Supervision

ICP In-Country Procurement

ICR Intensive Combat Rate

ICS Integrated Communications System

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ID	Identification
ILS	Instrument Landing System
INF	Infantry
INTEL	Intelligence
IRAN	Inspect and Repair as Necessary/Needed
J	Joint Staff (Multi-Service) Numbers/Format same as "G" above
JCRC	Joint Casualty Resolution Center
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff (United States)
JEIM	Jet Engine Intermediate Maintenance
JGS	Joint General Staff (South Vietnam)
JMA	Junior Military Academy
JOC	Joint Operation Center
JOSS	Joint Overseas Switch
JP-4	Jet Engine Aviation Fuel
KIA	Killed in Action
KM	Kilometer
KW	Kilowatt
L-HOUR	Launch Hour
LANG	Language
LAW	Light Antitank Weapon
LCC	Amphibious Command Ship
LCM	Landing Craft, Mechanized
LCU	Landing Craft, Utility
LCVP	Landing Craft, Vehicle, Personnel

# UNCLASSIFIED

LF	Low Frequency
LMAT	Logistics Management Assistance Team, Inc.
LN	Local National(s)
LOC	Line(s) of Communication
LPH	Amphibious Assault Ship
LSB	Logistics Support Base
LSI	Lear Siegler, Inc.
LSIL	Landing Ship Infantry Light
ISSL	Landing Ship Support Large
LSM	Landing Ship Medium
LST	Landing Ship Tank
LTC/LTCOL	Lieutenant Colonel
LTG	Lieutenant General
LTL	Interprovincial Route (South Vietnam)
LZ	Landing Zone
M	Million
MAB	Marine Amphibious Brigade
MAC	Military Airlift Command
MACO	Marshalling Area Control Officer
MACV	Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
MAJ	Major
MAP	Military Assistance Program
MARS	Military Affiliate Radio Station
MASF	Military Assistance Service Funded
MAU	Marine Amphibious Unit(s)

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MEDEVAC	Medical Evacuation
MEDTC	Military Equipment Delivery Team, Cambodia
MG	Major General
MHE	Materiel Handling Equipment
MI	Military Intelligence
MIA	Missing in Action
MIL	Military
MILCON	Military Construction
MILSTAMP	Military Standard Transportation and Movement Procedures
MIN	Minor/Minimum
MLO	Military Liaison Office/Officer
MM	Millimeter
MMC	Medium Maintenance Center(s)/Materiel Management Center
MOGAS	Automotive Fuel (Gasoline)
MOI	Ministry of Interior (GVN)
MOND	Ministry of National Defense (GVN)
MOS	Military Occupational Specialty
MP	Military Police
MPA	Military Personnel, Army
MR	Military Region(s)
MSC	Military Sealift Command
MSM	Minesweeper, River (Converted LCM-6)
MSS	Military Security Service
MT	Measurement Tons

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8

MTC	Marine Training Center
MTT	Mobile Training Team(s)
N	Naval Staff; See "G" Above
NAVAIDS	Navigational Aids
NCNRC	National Council for National Reconciliation and Concord
NCO	Noncommissioned Officer
NCOIC	Noncommissioned Officer in Charge
NCS	Net Control Station
NDB	Nondirectional Beacon
NDC	National Defense Center (United States)
NEMVAC	Noncombatant Emergency Evacuation
NGFS	Naval Gunfire Support
NLDV	Negotiated Level Dollar Value
NMCC	National Military Command Center (United States)
NOC	Naval Operations Center
NORM	Not Operationally Ready Maintenance
NORS	Not Operationally Ready Supply
NSN	National Stock Numbers
NTC	National Training Center(s)
NVA	North Vietnamese Army
NVAF	North Vietnamese Air Force
NVN	North Vietnam
OB	Order of Battle
OCE	Office of Civil Engineer

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OCO	Office of the Chief of Ordnance
OIC	Officer in Charge
OJT	On-The-Job Training
O&M	Operation and Maintenance
OPCON	Operational Control
OPF	Official Personnel Folder(s)
OPLAN	Operational Plan
OR	Operational Readiness/Operationally Ready
ORD	Ordnance
OSA	Office of the Special Assistant (United States Mission <del>CIA</del> )
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense (United States)
PACAF	Pacific Air Force
PA&E	Pacific Architects & Engineers, Inc.
PBR	Patrol Boat River
PCE	Page Communications Engineers, Inc./Patrol Craft Escort
PCH&T	Packing, Crating, Handling and Transportation
PCN	Program Change Notice(s)
PDO	Property Disposal Officer
PF	Popular Force(s)
PGM	Patrol Gunboat Motor
PLT	Platoon(s)
PMEL	Precision Measuring Equipment Laboratory
POI	Program of Instruction
POL	Petroleum, Oils and Lubricants

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POLWAR	Political Warfare
PRG	Provisional Revolutionary Government/South Vietnam (Viet Cong)
PROG	Programmed
PROVMAG	Provisional Marine Air Group
PSDF	Peoples' Self-Defense Force(s)
PW	Prisoner of War
PX	Post Exchange
QA	Quality Assurance
QC	Quality Control
QL	National Highway (South Vietnam)
QM	Quartermaster
QTR	Quarter
RADM	Rear Admiral
RADS	Rapid Area Distribution Support
RDV	Requisition Dollar Value
RECON/RECCE	Reconnaissance
REGT	Regiment
RF	Regional Force(s)
RF MG	Regional Force Mobile Group
RGR	Ranger
RIF	Reduction in Force
RLO	Regional Liaison Office(s)/Officer(s)
RLT	Regimental Landing Team
RO	Requisition Objective

# UNCLASSIFIED

ROC	Republic of China
ROKN	Republic of Korea Navy
RPC	Reparable Processing Center
RTAFB	Royal Thai Air Force Base
RVN	Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam)
RVNAF	Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces
RVNAFLS	Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces Language School
SAFFO	Special Assistant to the Ambassador for Field Operations (United States Mission)
SAM	Surface-to-Air Missile
SAR	Search and Rescue
SASP	Security Assistance Surveillance Program
SATP	Security Assistance Training Program
SBD	Signal Base Depot
SCARWAF	Special Category Army with Air Force
SCD	Special Collection Detachment
SCH	School
SEA	Southeast Asia
SECDEF	Secretary of Defense (United States)
SECORD	Secure Voice Cordboard
SEP	Separate (as in RF Company)
SFC	Sergeant First Class
SIGINT	Signal Intelligence
SIMS	Single Integrated Military (Telecommunications) System
SMSGT	Senior Master Sergeant

XX  
UNCLASSIFIED

# UNCLASSIFIED

SO	Stockage Objective
SOA	Supervisor of Airlift
SOC	Special Operations Center
SOP	Standing Operating Procedure(s)
SPARROW HAWK	United States Marine Corps Reaction Force
SPG	Special Planning Group
SQDN	Squadron
SS	Steamship
SSS	Sub-subsector
ST	Short Ton(s)
S&T/S&TC	Supply and Transportation/Center
STD	Strategic Technical Directorate
SVC	Service
SVN	South Vietnam
T	Ton(s)
TA	Territorial Artillery
TAC	Tactical
TACC	Tactical Air Control Center
TACAIR	Tactical Air
TACAN	Tactical Air Navigation
TC	Training Center
TCC	Telecommunications Center
TCN	Third Country National(s)
TDY	Temporary Duty
TET	Vietnamese Lunar New Year

# UNCLASSIFIED

TF	Territorial Force(s)
TF-76	Task Force 76 (United States Navy)
TFARS	Territorial Forces Activity Reporting System
TIGER OPS	Flying Tiger (Airlines) Operations Office
TMDE	Test Measuring and Diagnostic Equipment
TMS	Training Management Section
TO	Technical Order(s)
TOE	Table of Organization and Equipment
TOW	Tube-launched, Optically-tracked, Wire-guided (Missile)
TRANS	Transportation
TSC	Tandem Switching Center/Satellite Communications Terminal
TSN	Tan Son Nhut (Air Base)
UDT	Underwater Demolition Team
UHF	Ultrahigh Frequency
UNK	Unknown
UNS	Unserviceable
UPT	Undergraduate Pilot Training
US	United States
USA	United States Army
USAF	United States Air Force
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDEL	United States Delegation
USIS	United States Information Service
USMC	United States Marine Corps

# UNCLASSIFIED

USN	United States Navy
USNS	United States Naval Ship
USS	United States Ship
USSAG	United States Support Activities Group
VAA	Vietnamese Army Arsenal
VADM	Vice Admiral
VARS	Visual Air Reconnaissance Search
VC	Viet Cong
VEH	Vehicle
VEMT	Vietnamese Equipment Management Team
VHF	Very High Frequency
VIP	Very Important Person
VN	Vietnamese
VNAF	Vietnamese Air Force
VNAFELS	Vietnamese Air Force English Language School
VNMA	Vietnamese Military Academy
VNMC	Vietnamese Marine Corps
VNN	Vietnamese Navy
VNNA	Vietnamese Naval Academy
WHEC	High Endurance Cutter
WIA	Wounded in Action
WPB	Patrol Boat
WPNS	Weapons
YOG	Gasoline Barge (Self-Propelled)
YR	Floating Repair

# SECRET NOFORN DISSEM

## CHAPTER 1

### THREAT ASSESSMENT

#### 1. (S/NFD) INTRODUCTION.

a. In August 1973, the Defense Attache Office (DAO) Saigon reported the following assessment of the implications of the Cease-fire Agreement:

"(1) The cease-fire, in effect, has given the communists the following advantages:

(a) Imposed controls on US military assistance to the Government of Vietnam (GVN). (There are no such controls on communist bloc assistance to North Vietnam (NVN) nor on North Vietnamese assistance to the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) in the south.)

(b) Imposed limits on the US military presence in South Vietnam (SVN).

(c) Enabled the communists to reinforce and resupply forces in SVN, uninhibited by Allied air, land or sea operations.

(d) Enabled the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) to move into SVN new weapon systems, specifically air defense weapons, artillery and armor, free of Allied counteraction.

(e) Enabled the NVA to construct large open logistical support bases, training camps and specialist schools, to improve and extend Lines of Communication (LOC), pipelines and telecommunications facilities.

(2) In conclusion, in SVN, the communists are rapidly developing their strongest military position in the history of the war."

#### b. PREPARATIONS.

(1) Exploiting these conditions to the fullest in the following two years, NVN proceeded to rebuild its defeated army of 1972 to a position of unprecedented strength and mobility. Infiltration of large amounts of materiel, along with over 200,000 combat troops, permitted the NVA to bring depleted units up to strength while engineers expanded the rudimentary NVA logistics network into a modern, efficient system, providing vastly improved mobility and support for field forces. To protect the expanded LOC network, the NVA moved into SVN hundreds of antiaircraft batteries with guns from 12.7mm to 100mm, as well as surface-to-air missiles (SA-2).

# SECRET NOFORN DISSEM

Most of these weapons were concentrated in what became the hub of the NVA logistics system, the Route 9 corridor, extending east to west just south of the former DMZ, thence southward along the Route 14 complex in western SVN.

(2) Major military improvements were also noted in NVN. A strategic reserve was reformed in NVN, eventually consisting of 10 infantry divisions by the time Saigon fell, 6 of which operated in SVN. At the same time, the North Vietnamese Air Force (NVAF) began receiving additional aircraft from the Soviet Union and communist China and aircrews received increasingly sophisticated training for potential air operations over SVN.

(3) During the post-cease-fire period, NVN continued to receive more than adequate military and economic aid, primarily from Moscow and Peking, affording sufficient assets not only for reconstruction efforts in NVN but also for rebuilding its military position in SVN.

(4) While the NVA was rapidly increasing its military might, the strength of the GVN correspondingly declined, a decline that became increasingly evident by mid-1974. Hanoi, sensing the balance of power changing in its favor, progressively accelerated military pressure in the south; initially to test GVN's strength and later to exploit weaknesses--military, economic and political. NVA planners stepped up their so-called three-pronged strategy--political, military and military proselyting--in a calculated effort to demoralize RVNAF, create political tension and undermine military and civilian confidence in the GVN.

(5) The FY 1975 cutback in US aid from a requested \$1.4 billion to an appropriated \$700 million had a profound impact throughout RVNAF. The budgets of many programs were either slashed or eliminated altogether as top planners implemented an austere defense plan in the face of an increasingly grave enemy threat.

(6) In August 1974, the communist leadership, confident that the time was ripe for bringing about radical changes in the power balance without inviting drastic US retaliation, issued a resolution calling for major attacks on the GVN pacification program. The antipacification campaign was to begin in December 1974 and last through June 1975. Its major aim would be to inflict a "fundamental defeat" on the GVN, setting the stage for "total" victory in 1976.

## c. DRY-SEASON CAMPAIGN.

(1) In early December 1974, the communists mounted their most intense offensive since the Cease-fire Agreement, the initial phase in their dry-season campaign. Major attacks occurred throughout

# SECRET NOFORN DISSEM

# SECRET NOFORN DISSEM

MR 3 and the delta witnessed the heaviest and prolonged phase of offensive activity in its history. This initial phase of the dry-season offensive culminated in the loss of Phuoc Long Province on 6 January 1975, a defeat of major significance. Phuoc Long was the first province to fall completely under communist control since 1954.

(2) Thus, the new year began ominously with the battlefield initiative in the hands of the NVA. The GVN leadership, increasingly uneasy about prospects for containing forecasted communist attacks, prepared contingency plans for conceding to the NVA major areas of the country, should NVA military initiatives and GVN budgetary constraints so dictate. Nonetheless, the basic defense posture remained unchanged: to maintain control of all territory the GVN held. This policy was based primarily on the anticipated appropriation by the US Congress of an additional \$300 million.

(3) After the fall of Phuoc Long in early January, battlefield activity lulled, with the exception of another phase of widespread attacks in the delta. Meanwhile, however, intelligence indicators--the most visible of which was a pronounced increase in infiltration activity--pointed to a near-term resumption of the communist dry-season campaign. The two-month lull in battlefield activity apparently represented a calculated pause by Hanoi to test US reaction to the loss of Phuoc Long, as well as to await a determination on the outcome of the congressional debate over the supplemental appropriation.

(4) In early March, Hanoi, emboldened by the lack of US response to the December-January offensive and apparently concluding that additional US aid to the GVN was not forthcoming, initiated the next phase of its military campaign to "fundamentally defeat" the GVN. Training cycles for recruits in NVN were drastically shortened to expedite the dispatch of combat troops to SVN and the NVN seven-division strategic reserve was mobilized for duty in the south.

## d. FINAL DEFEAT.

(1) Military operations commenced in early March when NVA forces in MR 2 interdicted all principal LOC's in the region. When it became apparent that RVNAF were unable to reopen these roads, the fateful evacuation of the highlands was ordered. The disintegration of RVNAF began.

(2) Meanwhile, equally fateful decisions entailing identical consequences for RVNAF in MR 1 were being implemented. A series of contradictory orders involving deployment of RVNAF units and defense of territory and cities led to a complete collapse of stability in

# SECRET NOFORN DISSEM

# SECRET NOFORN DISSEM

the region and, ultimately, defeat and abandonment of vast quantities of equipment and ammunition.

(3) By early April, after MR 1 collapsed and the remaining GVN controlled area of MR 2 was in chaos, the NVA launched what proved to be the final decisive military action. A three-division assault was mounted against the 18th ARVN Division at Xuan Loc, some 40 miles northeast of Saigon. While the NVA paid a heavy price for its ultimate victory at Xuan Loc, it was clear by that time that the end was quickly approaching.

(4) Following the defeat at Xuan Loc, a lull in major fighting ensued during which the NVA consolidated its existing forces in MR 3 and MR 4, deployed other divisions from northern SVN and its recently introduced reserve from NVN and positioned them strategically on all corridors into Saigon. The GVN, desperately attempting to reconstitute its disintegrating forces for defense of the city, was hopelessly outmatched. The only alternatives by 20 April were whether Saigon would fall as a result of a massive military assault or surrender. The evacuation of Americans and endangered South Vietnamese was accelerated in the following days. Finally, on 28 April, an air attack on Tan Son Nhut, followed the next morning by a heavy rocket bombardment, clearly signalled the end.

(5) Meanwhile, on 21 April, President Thieu stepped down and his successors attempted to bring about a negotiated settlement. Hanoi, however, would accept only unconditional surrender. Faced with no other alternative than the destruction of Saigon, President Duong Van Minh handed over the reins of the government to the communists on 30 April, only hours after the last American had departed, thus ending a long and tragic struggle in American and Vietnamese history.

## 2. (S/NFD) NORTH VIETNAM.

a. From the beginning of the offensive, Hanoi and PRG propaganda concentrated on justifying and euphemizing the onslaught of the NVA. Unable to call the activity a "general offensive" because of its "respect" for the Paris Agreement, Hanoi propagandized it as communist "counterattacks," "punishing attacks," and "popular uprisings." However, propagandists found it difficult to explain the mass exodus of population from the areas of "popular uprising" and resorted to claiming that local residents were forced to leave by fleeing ARVN troops who allegedly used them as shields.

b. At the same time, the PRG endeavored to entice more of the population to remain in "liberated" areas. In early April, following the NVA conquest of MR 1 and most of MR 2, the PRG issued a "Ten-point Policy Toward the Newly-Liberated Area," establishing

# SECRET NOFORN DISSEM

# SECRET NOFORN DISSEM

rules for communist administration and promising lenient treatment to those persons who were willing to cooperate with the new regime. In summary, the policy would:

- (1) Dismantle the GVN political and military machinery, integrate GVN civil servants into the PRG apparatus and abolish all political parties and factions;
- (2) Guarantee "democratic liberties," including religious freedom;
- (3) Promote ethnic and social equality;
- (4) Guarantee normal economic activity, maintain public order and security and react harshly to sabotage or counterrevolutionary activity;
- (5) Invest the management of all property in the PRG;
- (6) Permit economic, industrial, communications and public utility activities to operate normally, guarantee employment and extend social services;
- (7) Restore and develop agriculture, fisheries, salt production, forestry and continue operation of plantations;
- (8) Continue operation of all cultural, scientific and technical installations, schools and hospitals;
- (9) Implement the PRG policy of 25 March 1975, toward former GVN military personnel, i.e., anyone who has supported or will support the PRG will be allowed to return home and be encouraged to engage in PRG activities; those who resist the revolution will be punished; those found guilty of anti-PRG activity "who have seriously repented, will be granted leniency";
- (10) Insure the lives and property of foreigners; but all foreigners must respect the independence and sovereignty of "Vietnam" and "must seriously implement all lines and policies" of the PRG.

c. Communist preparation for major combat was highlighted by NVA logistics activities during early 1975. Large amounts of armor, artillery, ammunition and other materiel were shipped southward in what became the most intensive NVA logistics campaign ever noted. During April, NVN forces extended their logistics system southward toward Saigon. By that time, previously denied portions of Route 14 in western SVN, as well as Route 1 along the coast, had become available to the NVA and were used extensively to provide logistics

SECRET NOFORN DISSEM

## SECRET NOFORN DISSEM

support for the final conquest of Saigon. Additionally, some equipment and materiel abandoned by retreating RVNAF units were used by the NVA. NVN coastal shipping activity also was quickly expanded to the captured SVN ports at Da Nang, Qui Nhon and Nha Trang. The intense two-year NVA effort to upgrade and expand its logistics system was most instrumental in setting the stage for the final offensive. The continued materiel support Hanoi received from Moscow and Peking during this period was in stark contrast to the diminishing materiel and moral support received by the GVN from the US.

d. NVA infiltration during the 1974-75 dry-season was also the most intense ever recorded. Over 178,000 combat troops arrived in SVN between 1 September 1974 and 30 April 1975; over 58,000 of these arrived in April alone. (Several thousand probably belonged to integral units and were not individual replacements normally counted in infiltration estimates.) Most of the integral unit moves occurred during April as Hanoi rapidly organized and dispatched units in response to the unexpected opportunities created by the collapse of GVN defenses. In addition to the record numbers of combat troops, there were large numbers of tanks, artillery pieces and antiaircraft weapons. Hundreds of vehicles moved along the expanded logistics network.

e. In addition to the heavy infiltration effort, Hanoi dispatched five of its seven strategic reserve divisions, normally stationed in NVN, as well as the 968th Division from southern Laos. These six divisions included some 48,000 troops in infantry units. The 968th NVA Division was the first to arrive, entering the central highlands from southern Laos in January. A short time later, the 316th Division entered from the north, deploying to the highlands where it probably participated in attacks on Ban Me Thuot in March. By the end of the offensive, the 316th was operating in Tay Ninh Province.

f. The 341st Division crossed the DMZ in late February or early March and subsequently deployed to western MR 3, where it participated in the attacks on Chon Thanh. The division then moved eastward and engaged in intense combat in the battle for Xuan Loc.

g. Three of the four divisions subordinate to the NVA I Corps--the 312th, 320B and 338th--deployed from their garrison areas near Thanh Hoa to northern MR 3, but did not participate in any major combat. The HQ I Corps deployed from NVN to Phuoc Long Province in early April. The remaining subordinate of the NVA I Corps--the 308th Division--stayed near Hanoi, as did the 308B Division. A regenerated 341B Division was moving or preparing to move south when the end came.

## SECRET NOFORN DISSEM

## SECRET NOFORN DISSEM

h. In air activity, the first NVAF flight activity over SVN began in February as transport aircraft began regular flights into northern MR 1. Initially confined to helicopters, flights gradually increased to include fixed wing as airfields such as Phu Bai and Da Nang became available.

i. Large numbers of air defense weapons were moved through the system. The most notable development was the introduction of surface-to-air missiles (SAM) into northern MR 3 in April. The presence of SA-2's as far south as Phuoc Long Province soon would have degraded further whatever effectiveness VNAF retained in the final days of the conflict.

### 3. (S/NFD) SOUTH VIETNAM.

#### a. MR 1:

(1) Military activity in MR 1 was relatively light until mid-March due to seasonal rains which inhibited major combat. Fighting in January focused on the high ground south and southwest of Hue--hills that had been fiercely contested since late August 1974. RVNAF finally secured most key terrain by mid-January, inflicting heavy casualties on 324B NVA Division elements and supporting independent regiments.

(2) Limited offensive activity during February was dominated by a series of sharp, but inconclusive, engagements southwest of Da Nang. In Quang Ngai Province, NVA/VC units continued the pattern of low-level attacks that had characterized activity in the province since mid-1974. Communist forces succeeded in consolidating control in the northeastern sector, but met with little success in central Quang Ngai. Spoiling actions by 2nd ARVN Division and ranger forces succeeded in holding in place the 52nd NVA Brigade elements which attempted, at one point, to move southward into Binh Dinh Province but which were forced to return.

(3) Meanwhile, preparations for a major offensive during the approaching dry-season (March to October) were underway. Major NVA units began to stockpile supplies, shift into attack positions and perform maintenance on heavy equipment. During late January, heavy truck traffic was noted on Route 9. New road construction was noted throughout MR 1 as the NVA improved its LOC and moved closer to CVN positions.

(4) Attack preparations were also noted in photography of late January, as NVA armor units rolled out vehicles in increasing numbers, probably for major maintenance. New armor parks, artillery positions and maintenance areas were detected during this time.

## SECRET NOFORN DISSEM

(5) After losing the high ground overlooking Route 1 south of Hue during January to GVN counterattacks, the NVA began to move additional units into the area during February. The 29th Regiment, previously detailed to the 304th NVA Division in Quang Nam, returned to its parent 324B NVA Division, while the 325th NVA Division shifted southward from Quang Tri to Thua Thien. Additional artillery, most notably the 164th Brigade, was also brought into southern Thua Thien by late February.

(6) In Quang Tri, local forces, including some from Quang Binh Province, NVN, replaced the 325th Division. Elements of the 341st and 316th NVA Divisions, which later deployed to MR 3, were possibly deployed to northern MR 1 initially as a reserve force.

(7) In southern MR 1, 2nd NVA Division forces moved from the Duc Duc area of Quang Nam to the Hau Duc/Tien Phuoc area of Quang Tin. In Quang Ngai Province, elements of the 52nd NVA Brigade attempted to deploy out of the province, initially to Binh Dinh, but were later forced to return to Quang Ngai to counter GVN spoiling operations there. By late February/early March, however, elements of the brigade redeployed northward to Quang Tin Province to support the 2nd NVA Division.

(8) Major fighting erupted on 8 March when communist forces attacked and occupied some 15 hamlets in southern Quang Tri and northern Thua Thien Provinces. Well over 100,000 refugees fled southward to Hue. At the same time, in southern MR 1, 2nd NVA Division and 52nd Brigade forces attacked and quickly overran the district capitals at Hau Duc and Tien Phuoc and threatened the Quang Tin Province capital of Tam Ky.

(9) On 12 March, while pressure was mounting in MR 1, President Thieu, increasingly apprehensive over the defense of Saigon, ordered the MR Commander, Lieutenant General (LTC) Ngo Quang Truong, to release the Airborne Division for deployment from the Da Nang area to Saigon. At the same time, he ordered LTC Truong to give top priority within MR 1 to the defense of Da Nang. LTC Truong strongly opposed the President's decision to move the Airborne Division. Reportedly, he flew to Saigon, and, as a result of his strong arguments, President Thieu postponed the planned departure of the airborne to the end of March. In anticipation of the airborne's departure, LTC Truong ordered the Marine Division to plan to deploy southward from its positions near Hue to the Da Nang area.

(10) Meanwhile, the situation in MR 2 was deteriorating rapidly, evidently reviving President Thieu's concern about Saigon. Accordingly, he renewed his order to move the Airborne Division. It commenced its seaborne deployment southward on or about 16 March and was reportedly scheduled to close in the Saigon area on 20-21 March. (Its 3rd Bde actually deployed to MR 2.)

(11) In the midst of the confusion over defensive strategy and the growing civilian panic, on 19 March, communist forces attacked across the Thach Han River, occupied the ruins of Quang Tri City and breached the outer defenses of Hue. GVN forces offered only token

## SECRET NOFORN DISSEM

resistance and quickly fell back. The GVN concentrated its efforts in the following days on establishing a new northern defense perimeter to protect Hue.

(12) To the south, along the high ground overlooking National Route 1 (QL-1) in Phu Loc District, units of the rangers and 1st ARVN Division, supported by a marine brigade, held against initial attacks by the 324B NVA Division. When the 325th NVA Division was also committed to the attacks on 21 March, ARVN initially delayed this unit in heavy fighting near Phu Loc District Town. However, by 22 March, QL-1 had been cut and RVNAF units were spread too thinly to launch an effective counterattack. A marine brigade was lost without being engaged south of Hue, while most of the rangers and 1st ARVN Division elements continued to defend west of the road cut.

(13) Meanwhile, GVN efforts to establish a new defense line north of Hue failed; by 24 March, the decision was made to abandon northern MR 1 entirely. By this time, thousands of civilian refugees were fleeing south toward Da Nang along QL-1, making an orderly military evacuation impossible. LTG Truong elected to evacuate as many troops as possible along a narrow coastal sand spit east of QL-1 where they could move without restriction until merging with the evacuation column north of the Hai Van Pass. The effort proved futile, however, as the growing panic, exacerbated by NVA pressure, turned the withdrawal into a rout. Only the Marine Division, which still had not deployed to Da Nang, escaped with any semblance of unit integrity.

(14) Meanwhile, the situation in southern MR 1 was also rapidly deteriorating. ARVN attempts to reinforce the Tam Ky area failed and, on 24 March, it fell. RVNAF abandoned Quang Ngai Province on the same day, leaving only the enclave at Chu Lai in GVN hands. It fell on 25 March.

(15) The massive influx of civilian refugees into Da Nang precipitated a breakdown in law and order. RVNAF attempts to establish defense perimeters around the city failed. On 30 March, Da Nang, in total chaos, fell without a shot being fired.

(16) In the debacle, the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Divisions were lost as identifiable military units, together with territorial and ranger forces. RVNAF managed to extract some 16,000 troops, including 4,000 marines, from MR 1, but nearly all heavy equipment was left behind.

(17) The disastrous chain of events resulted directly from the ill-advised withdrawal of the Airborne Division. Subsequent efforts to adjust defenses in the face of increased communist pressure destroyed confidence and morale throughout RVNAF and caused panic among the civilians. This, in turn, led to total collapse from within, handing the communists a stunning victory at minimal cost.

## SECRET NOFORN DISSEM

b. MR 2:

(1) In MR 2, the communist general offensive also resulted in the complete collapse of RVNAF. Heightened infiltration levels, upgrading of units and the introduction of new divisions all presaged the offensive.

(2) Seasonal infiltration to the B-3 Front (central highlands) began in December 1974 and dramatically increased during January and February 1975, allowing communist forces to build up to near full Table of Organization and Equipment (TOE) strength. Continued infiltration during April probably allowed the NVA to replace at least half of the losses incurred during the March offensive.

(3) In January, the headquarters and two regiments of the 968th NVA Division moved into the Duc Co area of Pleiku Province from southern Laos, while one regiment deployed north of Kontum City. The 968th, which had not engaged in combat for nearly two years, was not involved directly in the offensive. This unit did, however, replace the 10th and 320th NVA Divisions in Kontum and Pleiku, allowing the latter to deploy southward for major attacks.

(4) In mid-February, the B-3 Front was further reinforced with the introduction of the probable 316th Division from NVN to the Ban Me Thuot area. Information on this unit was reported only briefly in mid-March during attacks on Ban Me Thuot. In southern DRV MR 5, the 3rd NVA Division in Binh Dinh Province also was augmented by the creation of a new artillery regiment, the 68th, prior to the offensive.

(5) All-source intelligence since December clearly indicated that an offensive was in the offing. Most assessments, however, focused upon the traditional threat areas of Kontum, Pleiku and Binh Dinh Provinces. ARVN commanders formulated plans based upon these indicators.

(6) On 28 February, NVA forces launched a series of heavy Attacks By Fire (ABF) and light probes north of Kontum City and west and southwest of Pleiku City. This was the first significant communist activity in the highlands in over a month. During the early hours on 4 March, communist forces damaged or destroyed at least eight bridges and culverts along QL-19 in Le Trung District, Pleiku Province, and Binh Khe District, Binh Dinh Province. The 953 NVA Regiment and elements of the 3rd NVA Division had moved southward undetected to interdict the road. RVNAF reacted to these developments, but never reopened the road.

(7) Beginning on 5 March, a rapidly-paced series of attacks occurred in Khanh Hoa, Phu Bon, Quang Duc and Darlac Provinces.

## SECRET NOFORN DISSEM

During this period, QL-21 was interdicted in western Khanh Hoa Province and QL-14 was interdicted in the tri-border area of Pleiku/Darlac/Phu Bon Provinces. Thuan Man District Town in Phu Bon Province was overrun, as were Duc Lap District Town and the Dak Song crossroads in Quang Duc Province. By 10 March, all province capitals in the northern highlands were isolated.

(8) During February and early March, the NVA repositioned major forces in the B-3 Front. Three regiments of the 10th NVA Division moved undetected to Darlac and northern Quang Duc Provinces. The 320th NVA Division moved to the Pleiku/Darlac/Phu Bon Province border, a move reported in late February by a rallier, but not confirmed until after the offensive began. The probable 316th Division moved to Darlac Province undetected.

(9) During the early hours of 10 March, 10th and 316th NVA Division forces, supported by two artillery regiments, one local force battalion and armor, attacked Ban Me Thuot and rapidly overran the city. MR 2 Headquarters at Pleiku initially reinforced Ban Me Thuot with the HQ/23rd ARVN Division and the two remaining battalions of its 53rd Regiment, two battalions of the 21st Ranger Group and two Regional Force (RF) battalions. Government forces continued to maintain pockets of resistance around the city and at Ban Me Thuot East airfield. On 14 March, MR 2 again reinforced with the 45th Regiment and the HQ and one battalion of the 44th Regiment/23rd ARVN Division. A government command post was established at Phuoc An District Town to the east and a counteroffensive was launched toward Ban Me Thuot on 15 March. GVN attacks failed and, by 18 March, Phuoc An was overrun. The rout and eventual defeat of the 23rd ARVN Division followed.

(10) The weekend of 15-16 March proved to be the turning point in MR 2. Following the failure of the 23rd ARVN Division at Ban Me Thuot, a precipitous and unorganized evacuation of all forces in Kontum and Pleiku Provinces began on 16 March. The exodus down long-abandoned Interprovincial Route (LTL) 7B resulted in the decimation of six ranger groups, the remaining two battalions of the 44th Regiment/23rd ARVN Division, all territorial forces in Kontum, Pleiku and Phu Bon Provinces and the loss of virtually all GVN armor and artillery in those areas. Lack of command and control and general panic led to ARVN units fighting among themselves and atrocities against the civilian populace. Final destruction of the convoy was carried out by the 320th NVA Division, which continuously attacked along the column from 18-24 March from Phu Thien District in Phu Bon Province to Cung Son District in western Phu Yen Province.

(11) The tragedy of the disastrous evacuation of the highlands and poor leadership by ARVN commanders resulted in lack of confidence and panic throughout the region. Subsequently, NVA forces appearing only with limited armor assets caused GVN resistance to fold.

## SECRET NOFORN DISSEM

## SECRET NOFORN DISSEM

(12) During the week of 22-28 March, the western districts of Binh Dinh, Phu Yen and Khanh Hoa Provinces fell. The remainder of Quang Duc and most of Lam Dong Provinces were abandoned and Dalat City was largely evacuated. By 1 April, the last of the central highlands provinces fell, as the remainder of Lam Dong and Tuyen Duc Provinces were ceded to 7th NVA Division elements. No major communist attacks had occurred and GVN territorial forces were moving back to reestablish control in previously abandoned Lam Dong Province; however, the flight of MR 2 HQ from Nha Trang terminated all effective resistance.

(13) In Binh Dinh Province, the abandonment of the northern districts began on 28 March with ARVN forces pulling back to Phu My. Fierce fighting continued between 3rd NVA and 22nd ARVN Division forces in Binh Khe district. On 31 March, communist forces attacked and overran Phu Cat Air Base and the 41st and 42nd Regiments/22nd ARVN Division were fighting through communist envelopments to establish an enclave at Qui Nhon City. The loss of Phu Cat Air Base on 31 March and the resultant pullout of VNAF, coupled with persistent NVA attempts to surround the 22nd ARVN Division west of Qui Nhon, made GVN presence in the province untenable. Remnants of the 41st and 42nd Regiments and the 22nd Division Headquarters subsequently were extracted by sea on 1-2 April. These were the only units in MR 2 to maintain unit integrity through 25 days of intensive combat.

(14) By 1 April, RVNAF resistance in Phu Yen and Khanh Hoa Provinces had dissipated, despite a creditable performance by the recently introduced 3rd Airborne Brigade. NVA tanks were in Tuy Hoa City, Duc My Training Center and Ninh Hoa District Town. On 1 April, II Corps Headquarters abandoned Nha Trang and, by 4 April, remaining territory of MR 2 was placed under MR 3 control.

(15) The collapse of RVNAF in early April was followed by a lull in activity, during which the GVN managed to extract some forces and civilian refugees. GVN defenses were established in Ninh Thuan and Binh Thuan Provinces, while NVA forces regrouped and prepared to continue the attack.

(16) Marines and other forces, as well as civilian refugees, were evacuated from Cam Ranh Bay between 1 and 5 April. Phan Rang Air Base was evacuated by VNAF on 2 April. Although no immediate NVA threat was presented, as many as three NVA divisions were reported moving south toward Cam Ranh Bay and Ninh Thuan Province. Phan Rang subsequently was reopened on a limited basis. Initially, the 2nd Airborne Brigade moved in to reinforce, but was later replaced by 2nd ARVN Division elements and a ranger group. In any event, Phan Rang finally fell to 3rd NVA Division forces on 16 April.

## SECRET NOFORN DISSEM

(17) In Binh Thuan Province, communist attacks increased in early April, culminating in the fall of Thien Giao District Town on 7-8 April. Sector forces continued to hold and even attempted to retake Thien Giao. The fall of Phan Rang, however, increased communist pressure along QL-1 and, by 18 April, Phan Thiet City and Binh Thuan fell to NVA forces. The conquest of MR 2 was complete, thus freeing all available communist forces for the attack on GVN MR 3.

### c. MR 3:

(1) In MR 3, the new year began ominously with the GVN loss of Phuoc Long Province. The province fell on 6 January, following concerted attacks by the 7th NVA Division and the newly-formed 3rd NVA Division (not to be confused with NVA's 3rd Division in Binh Dinh), supported by armor and intense heavy artillery fire. The loss of Phuoc Long represented a key juncture in the communist timetable for victory. The province was the first to fall completely under their domination since 1954, an event of considerable psychological impact. This victory strengthened Hanoi's belief that the relative balance of power in the south had shifted in its favor. Most importantly, failure by the US to intervene or sustain minimal aid to the GVN made it clear that US support in the conflict had waned. This was not lost to the communists who moved ahead with increased confidence.

(2) Initially, the NVA infiltrated at least six infantry regiments, including the entire 341st Division, and over 50,000 additional combat replacements. After the loss of the northern two regions by early April, the NVA, now able to use captured equipment and all-weather roads in former GVN-controlled areas, eventually sent elements of nine more infantry divisions, as well as several major armor, artillery and antiaircraft units (including one SA-2 regiment) to the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN). The infiltration total for April alone was 58,000 personnel, mostly to COSVN.

(3) In late March, new COSVN guidance advanced the communist timetable for victory. With the northern two regions collapsing, communist forces were directed to push forward to a quick and total victory. The COSVN Resolution for 1975, issued in late 1974, specifically singled out Tay Ninh Province, among other areas, as a major target for the 1974-75 dry-season campaign. After the fall of Phuoc Long Province, NVA deployments of major units seemed to bear out that forecast.

(4) In early January, the communist succeeded in gaining control of Nui Ba Den, thus denying the GVN visual observation of the best avenues of approach to Tay Ninh City. After the Phuoc Long

## SECRET NOFORN DISSEM

## SECRET NOFORN DISSEM

battle, the 3rd NVA Division deployed to Tay Ninh and battlefield preparations continued. By March, as many as 12 infantry regiments, plus armor and artillery, were in position around Tay Ninh City and major assaults on the city appeared imminent.

(5) Beginning on 10 March, communist combined arms attacks in southwestern Tay Ninh Province resulted in the elimination of all GVN presence west of the Vam Co Dong River, while 9th NVA Division forces succeeded in overrunning Tri Tam District Town on the Tay Ninh/Binh Duong Province border. Elements of the 3rd, 5th and 9th NVA Divisions concentrated their activities in southern Tay Ninh Province, with QL-22 and the key road junction at Go Dau Ha as the principal targets, but no attacks on the city occurred. The 25th ARVN Division, supported by the 3rd Armor Brigade and other forces, succeeded in keeping the road open most of the time and in holding Go Dau Ha.

(6) After a brief lull, the 316th NVA Division was committed in Tay Ninh Province, with its primary target being the 25th ARVN Division base camp at Cu Chi, Hau Nghia Province. By mid-April, the 3rd and 5th NVA Divisions, located in the Parrot's Beak, were joined by elements of the 8th and 9th Infantry and 27th Sapper Divisions.

(7) In mid-April, the major focus of activity shifted to Long An Province, where communist forces consisting of elements of the 3rd, 5th, 8th and 9th NVA Infantry and the 27th Sapper Divisions attempted to cut QL-4 and parallel canals, thus isolating Saigon from the delta. Initially, 7th and 9th ARVN Division forces inflicted heavy casualties on communist units, many of which contained new and inadequately trained infiltrators. Remnants of the 22nd ARVN Division were deployed to Long An Province, thus freeing 7th ARVN Division forces to return to their normal Area of Operations (AO) in central Dinh Tuong Province. In the final week, the communists succeeded in interdicting QL-4 from Tan An to Ben Luc, as well as softening up GVN control along the southern approaches of Saigon.

(8) Meanwhile, in central MR 3, RVNAF successfully evacuated the isolated positions at An Loc and Chon Thanh in Binh Long Province. The evacuation of An Loc went unopposed but, in late March, units from the newly-infiltrated and poorly-trained 341st NVA Division and the 9th NVA Division unsuccessfully attempted to prevent the final exfiltration of GVN forces from Chon Thanh. After the collapse of the northern regions, major elements of the NVA 1st Corps (312th, 320B, 338th Divisions) and the B-3 Front (320th and 10th Divisions) deployed to central MR 3; however, these five divisions did not actively engage in combat until the final days.

## SECRET NOFORN DISSEM

## SECRET NOFORN DISSEM

(9) In the eastern part of the region, elements of the 6th and 7th NVA Divisions launched major attacks against GVN positions along QL-1, QL-20 and LTL-333. The NVA successfully interdicted these routes and overran Dinh Quan and Binh Khanh District Towns in Long Khanh Province and Hoi Duc District Town in Binh Tuy Province. On 9 April, communist forces, reinforced by the 341st and 325th NVA Divisions, commenced attacks west of Xuan Loc, the capital of Long Khanh Province, in order to defeat the 18th ARVN Division and gain control of the QL-1 avenue of approach to the Saigon/Bien Hoa area. The GVN quickly reinforced Xuan Loc with an airborne brigade, the 3rd Armor Brigade and a regiment from the 5th ARVN Division. The ARVN made a strong defense, but attrition of the 18th ARVN Division and the airborne brigade at Xuan Loc and the inability to open QL-1 west of the town, necessitated the withdrawal from Xuan Loc by 20 April. Meanwhile, Ham Tan in Binh Tuy Province had been lost.

(10) ARVN attempted to regroup and redeploy its remaining forces to defend the Long Binh/Bien Hoa area and Vung Tau in Phuoc Tuy Province. Airborne forces, supported by remnants of the 3rd ARVN Division, fought along Route 2 against a communist move south from Xuan Loc. East of Bien Hoa, the 18th Division, after a very short rest period, assumed the forward defense position, with two marine brigades taking positions just east of Bien Hoa and Long Binh. A badly battered 3rd Armor Brigade was held in reserve.

(11) In the Saigon area, elements of three ranger groups and a recently created airborne brigade were deployed on the western flank and elements of one airborne brigade remained in reserve.

(12) From 20 to 26 April, an uneasy lull prevailed while the enemy made plans, conducted reconnaissance, established communications and issued orders for the final phase of the offensive. He had massed up to 16 divisions in MR 3 and had deployed forces for a three-pronged attack against Saigon. On 21 April, President Thieu resigned and was succeeded by Vice President Tran Van Huong, whose government, however, was unacceptable to the communists. After several days of political paralysis, on 27 April, Huong was succeeded by Duong Van Minh, who, it was believed, would be able to negotiate with the communists.

(13) On 26 April, the communists struck in eastern MR 3. In Bien Hoa Province, heavy attacks occurred on QL-1 east of Bien Hoa and QL-15 to the south, and Bien Hoa itself received heavy fire attacks. Meanwhile, other NVA units were pushing south on Route 2 and attacking Ba Ria in Phuoc Tuy Province. By the following day, GVN forces had been pushed westward along QL-1, QL-15 was effectively interdicted and Ba Ria was lost. With the interdiction of QL-15 and the loss of Ba Ria, a planned escape route to Vung Tau was eliminated. By 28 April, the MR 3 staff at Bien Hoa was not

## SECRET NOFORN DISSEM

operational, as the city continued to receive heavy fire attacks. Meanwhile, communist forces elsewhere increased pressure, especially in Long An and Hau Nghia Provinces. Saigon itself received several rocket attacks and Tan Son Nhut was bombed by former VNAF pilots on 28 April.

(14) Beginning early in the morning of 29 April, the communists initiated the final assault. A major rocket attack on Tan Son Nhut precipitated the evacuation of all remaining US personnel, which, in turn, led to the departure of VNAF and other key RVNAF personnel. By noon, JGS and MR 3 HQ were leaderless. As the evacuation was in progress, the communists moved closer to the city, with some fighting along Saigon's southwestern edge. Three VNAF aircraft were downed in the Saigon environs by SA-7 missiles. Communist forces succeeded in overrunning the 25th Division's camp at Cu Chi, while NVA 1st Corps troops pursued fleeing soldiers from the 5th ARVN Division. Hau Nghia Province was overrun by forces of the 3rd and 9th NVA Divisions. The 22nd ARVN Division in Long An Province apparently put up the stiffest resistance. The 22nd, a shocking failure in 1972, but which later developed into a highly effective unit that survived the MR 2 debacle, held out unexpectedly well against elements of the 5th, 8th and 9th NVA Divisions. Initial NVA penetrations into Hoc Mon District, northwest of Saigon, were blunted by 3rd Ranger Group forces. Defenses around Bien Hoa crumbled and communist forces probably were on the outskirts of Vung Tau.

(15) On 30 April, President Minh complied with the final communist demand for the unconditional surrender of the GVN and ordered RVNAF to cease-fire and remain in place. The communists quickly occupied Saigon and Bien Hoa and began establishing control.

#### d. MR 4:

(1) In MR 4, while able to realize gradual, moderate gains during the first two months of the period, the communists did not pose a critical threat until events in other regions made their full impact on RVNAF morale and will to fight.

(2) During the period, the NVA/VC conducted their usual high points of activity. While no spectacular results occurred, the high points represented a continuation of a year-long process by which the communists had been gradually able to weaken RVNAF strength, combat capabilities and morale; to establish staging areas near critical targets such as Can Tho, QL-4 and My Tho; and to improve and upgrade their own combat capability, free from RVNAF interference.

## SECRET NOFORN DISSEM

## SECRET NOFORN DISSEM

(3) In the northern delta, the principal communist area of interest was along the Dinh Tuong/Long An Province border. The 5th NVA Division, after months of futile efforts to dislodge RVNAF from Kien Tuong Province, regrouped in the Parrot's Beak in mid-March. By mid-April, this division joined with elements of the 3rd and 9th Infantry and 27th Sapper Divisions and succeeded in interdicting QL-4 in Long An Province. In Dinh Tuong Province, elements of the 8th NVA Division continued attempts to pressure QL-4 in the province center. In April, the 8th, with two regiments moved into Long An Province. Communist forces were generally able to tie down RVNAF in the northern delta and prevent redeployments for the defense of Saigon; however, in most major engagements they came out second best.

(4) In March, further south along the QL-4 corridor, elements of the DT-1 and D-1 Regiments joined the D-3 Regiment in Vinh Long Province. Their arrival tripled communist forces which had been steadily defeating RVNAF territorial forces throughout the previous year. The 16th Regiment/9th ARVN Division moved into Vinh Long Province early in April to counter the threat. In late April, the DT-1 Regiment returned to Dinh Tuong to fill the void left by the 8th NVA Division.

(5) The other significant area of activity was in Phong Dinh, where all three regiments of the 4th NVA Division moved into staging positions from which they launched strong attacks against Binh Thuy Airfield and Can Tho. During March and April, the 21st ARVN Division, with effective air and artillery support, succeeded in pushing the 4th NVA Division back from forward positions.

(6) Information from MR 4 after 28 April is very sketchy. No major combat apparently occurred in the last days and it appears that RVNAF surrendered peacefully after 30 April. The MR 4 commander, MG Nam, who had refused to be evacuated from his country, was captured.

## SECRET NOFORN DISSEM

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## CHAPTER 2

### FRIENDLY SITUATION

#### 1. (C) GENERAL.

a. As this final assessment reporting period began, the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF), were engaged in three significant encounters, one in Military Region (MR) 1 and two in MR 3.

b. In MR 1, Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) 1st Infantry Division (1st Div) forces, succeeded in retaking all the high ground between Hue and Hai Van Pass along National Route (QL)-1, on 16 January 1975, after a month-long operation.

c. In MR 3 the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) took Phuoc Binh (Song Be) and, subsequently, the remainder of Phuoc Long Province. This defeat constituted the first loss of an entire province to the communists since 1954. In addition, the NVA captured all of Nui Ba Den (mountain) overlooking Tay Ninh City. While the loss of Nui Ba Den was of questionable tactical significance, it was a serious blow to RVNAF morale.

d. From 6 January, when Phuoc Long fell, until the night of 9/10 March, when the assault on Ban Me Thuot began, a relative lull in the scope and intensity of hostile activity generally prevailed throughout the country. RVNAF and North Vietnamese Army/Viet Cong (NVA/VC) forces engaged in operations for control of isolated and strategically unimportant locations. Disposition of ARVN forces is covered in Chapter 5.

#### 2. (C) MILITARY REGION 1.

a. Activity in January and February remained light due primarily to seasonal rains which inhibited major operations. The dominant activity in January centered on the mountainous terrain southeast of Hue which had been heavily contested since late August 1974. Major activity ceased in mid-January when the 1st Div and their supporting forces regained control over most of the high ground along QL-1 between Hue and the Hai Van Pass. Sporadic heavy activity occurred in Quang Nam Province during February, but neither side made significant gains. Communist forces in Quang Ngai continued to erode security throughout the province during the early months. Spoiling operations by 2nd Div and ranger forces succeeded in holding in place major elements of the 52d NVA Brigade (Bde), which had planned to move south into Binh Dinh Province.

b. Major activity commenced on 2 March when communist forces struck in Quang Tri and northern Thua Thien Provinces. In mid-March,

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elements of the Marine Division began deploying from their former Areas of Operation (AO) to replace Airborne (Abn) units departing the Da Nang area for Saigon, (precipitating a southward exodus of over 100,000 refugees toward Hue). The NVA, supported by armor, attacked across the northern defense line on 19 March. Quang Tri Province was abandoned and RVNAF began to establish a new defense line north of Hue. In the following days, RVNAF resistance dissipated in the face of civilian panic and confusion over defense priorities in the region. Hue was abandoned on 24 March and in the ensuing evacuation, nearly all Government of Vietnam (GVN) units were destroyed and the majority of their equipment was abandoned.

c. Communist pressure also increased on 8 March in Quang Tin Province. Within three days, the district towns of Hau Duc and Tien Phuoc were overrun and the province capital of Tam Ky was imperiled. Despite the arrival of ranger reinforcements, Tam Ky fell on 24 March. To the south, Quang Ngai Province was abandoned on the same day.

d. The focus of attention then shifted to Da Nang which was rapidly degenerating into total chaos due to the massive influx of civilian refugees and armed RVNAF stragglers and their dependents. Despite efforts to establish a viable defense, Da Nang fell on 30 March, completing the collapse of MR 1. Some 16,000 troops were evacuated before MR 1 was abandoned. Elements of the 2nd and 3rd Div's and the Marine Division were moved south and partially reconstituted during April. Nearly all equipment, including scores of aircraft, was abandoned and most RVNAF logistics stores fell intact into communist hands.

e. The disintegration of RVNAF in MR 1 within a three-week period can be attributed principally to President Thieu's ill-timed mid-March decision to withdraw the Abn Div from Quang Nam Province. The decision came at a time when RVNAF confidence was already shaken. Subsequent efforts to adjust defensive priorities in the region were complicated by indecision among top leaders. Civilian panic then overtook any constructive efforts to salvage a viable defense of the remaining areas still under GVN control.

### 3. (C) MILITARY REGION 2.

a. In MR 2, military activity remained at a low level during early 1975. However, in March, communist initiated military activity rose markedly to the most widespread fighting since the cease-fire. The NVA offensive began in the central highlands on 4 March with the interdiction of QL-19 at eight points in eastern Pleiku and western Binh Dinh Provinces. In the Mang Yang Pass, Fire Support Base (FSB) 94 was overrun; occupation of this FSB enabled the communists to prevent repair of destroyed bridges on QL-19. Beginning on 5 March, the NVA interdicted QL-21 in western

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Khanh Hoa Province and QL-14 was interdicted in the tri-border area of Pleiku/Darlac/Phu Bon Provinces. Thuan Man District town in Phu Bon Province, Duc Lap District town and the Dak Song crossroads in Quang Duc were overrun. By 10 March, all province capitals in the northern highlands were isolated.

b. On 10 March, the Darlac Province capital at Ban Me Thuot came under intense attack by two NVA divisions. II Corps Headquarters (HQ) reinforced quickly with elements of the 53rd Regiment/23rd Div, two ranger battalions and two Regional Force (RF) battalions. Later, on 14 March, additional elements of the 23rd Div arrived. A command post was established east of Ban Me Thuot at Phuoc An on 15 March and a counterattack was launched. By 18 March, however, defeat was final. Phuoc An was overrun and the 23rd Div was decimated as it withdrew toward Khanh Hoa Province.

c. On 15 March, the fateful evacuation of the northern highlands was begun. With no advance preparation, GVN forces began the tragic exodus down Interprovincial Route (LTL) 7B toward Tuy Hoa, Phu Yen Province, on the coast. As in MR 1, general panic and an absence of military discipline, exacerbated by communist attacks, led to near total destruction of remaining forces in the highlands. Remnants of units were later refitted and assigned to other units.

d. On 22 March, GVN resistance in Quang Duc folded when the province capital at Gia Nghia and Kien Duc subsector were abandoned. By the first week in April, the remaining highland provinces of Lam Dong and Tuyen Duc had fallen.

e. The western districts of the northern coastal provinces of Binh Dinh, Phu Yen and Khanh Hoa fell between 22 and 28 March. Abandonment of the northern districts of Binh Dinh began on 28 March as ARVN forces withdrew to Phu My. On 31 March, the NVA overran Phu Cat Air Base (AB). Meanwhile, 22nd Div elements fought through NVA envelopments in Binh Khe District and established an enclave at Qui Nhon. Remnants of the 41st and 42nd Regiments, the only units to maintain unit integrity in MR 2, were evacuated by sea on 1 and 2 April. On 1 April, II Corps HQ evacuated Nha Trang, leaving a GVN presence in only two provinces of MR 2, Ninh Thuan and Binh Thuan.

f. In Ninh Thuan, Phan Rang AB was abandoned on 2 April although no immediate hostile threat was in evidence. A few days later, Phan Rang was reopened on a limited basis by the 2nd Abn Bde, which was replaced later by 2nd Div and ranger elements. Phan Rang was attacked in force on 14 April and overrun by 16 April.

g. In Binh Thuan, communist attacks in early April led to the fall of Thien Giao District town by 8 April. Sector forces continued to resist, but the fall of Phan Rang on 16 April placed them in an untenable position. By 18 April, Phan Thiet, the province capital, had fallen and the communist conquest of MR 2 was complete.

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h. As in MR 1, one fateful decision--to abandon the highlands--was the principal catalyst in the defeat. The hasty, ill-prepared evacuation lead to civilian panic and a complete breakdown in military discipline.

## 4. MILITARY REGION 3.

a. In MR 3, the year began with the GVN loss on 6 January of Phuoc Long Province, the first province to fall completely under communist control. The GVN outpost on Nui Ba Den in Tay Ninh Province fell at the same time. These losses were the culmination of major NVA attacks throughout the region in December 1974.

b. A two-month lull in major combat ensued during which it appeared Tay Ninh Province would receive major attacks. Numerous shellings of the city and its environs were conducted, but the anticipated all-out effort never materialized.

c. On 10 March, NVA attacks forced the GVN to concede all territory west of the Vam Co Dong river in southwestern Tay Ninh. To the east, Tri Tam District town, on the Binh Duong Province border was overrun on 11 March. Activity in the area thereafter focused primarily on the principal Lines of Communication (LOC), QL-1 and QL-22, leading to Tay Ninh City, but ARVN kept the roads open for the most part. By mid-April, the principal focus shifted to southern Long An Province as major NVA formations moved from Tay Ninh. The principal activity centered on QL-4 and adjacent canals, the major LOC connecting Saigon to the delta. The 7th and 9th Div held off NVA attacks in the area initially and inflicted heavy casualties on communist forces. Elements of the reconstituted 22nd Div then replaced the 7th Div forces and continued to blunt communist attacks. During the final week, however, NVA units successfully interdicted QL-4 between Tan An and Ben Luc.

d. In central MR 3, activity remained light throughout the period, with one notable exception. President Thieu's policy of retrenchment from marginal areas led to the decision to abandon the GVN's presence in Binh Long Province at An Loc and Chon Thanh. An Loc was evacuated without opposition, but the combined forces from An Loc and Chon Thanh met resistance in their southward move from Chon Thanh to Lai Khe where they finally linked up with 5th Div forces in late March.

e. In eastern MR 3, the NVA overran the district towns of Dinh Quan and Binh Khanh in Long Khanh Province and Hoai Duc in Binh Tuy Province and interdicted the principal LOC, QL-1, QL-20 and LTL-33 in the area in March, cutting off overland access to MR 2. On 9 April, 18th Div forces near Xuan Loc came under intense attack by elements of four NVA divisions. The 18th was quickly reinforced

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by airborne and 5th Div units and the 3rd Armored Bde. Despite the most creditable performance by RVNAF to date during the offensive, overwhelming communist strength dictated withdrawal from Xuan Loc by 20 April. In the meantime, Ham Tan in Binh Tuy Province, a principal staging area for reconstituting disintegrated RVNAF units, was lost.

f. Airborne and 3rd Div forces moved south along Route 2 from Xuan Loc to counter the communist advanced toward Ba Ria. The 18th Division, after a short rest period, assumed forward defensive positions east of Bien Hoa and Long Binh. They were backed up by two reconstituted marine brigades (minus). The battered 3rd Armored Bde was held in reserve.

g. After an approximate one-week lull, the NVA resumed the attack. Major attacks were launched east of Bien Hoa on QL-1 and on QL-15 to the south, and Bien Hoa itself received heavy Attacks by Fire (ABF). Airborne and 3rd Div forces on Route 2 came under attack and withdrew from Ba Ria on 27 April. By 28 April, the III Corps staff at Bien Hoa had ceased operations. At the same time, the communists increased pressure in Long An and Hau Nghia Provinces. On 28 April, Tan Son Nhut AB was bombed by former Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) pilots. The following morning, a major ABF against Tan Son Nhut precipitated the evacuation of all remaining United States (US) as well as key RVNAF personnel. Fighting was reported on the southwestern outskirts of Saigon and three VNAF aircraft were downed by SA-7 missiles. Various individual units continued to resist, but their cause was hopeless. On 30 April, President Duong Van (Big) Minh, after only four days in office, surrendered and ordered RVNAF to cease-fire and remain in place.

## 5. MILITARY REGION 4.

a. The war in the delta continued much along the same lines as reported in previous assessments. Despite the general collapse that occurred in the other regions, GVN forces in the delta generally maintained their positions vis-a-vis the communists until very near the end. Events in the delta, as in the past, continued to have little direct bearing on the situation elsewhere; and the reverse was also true until the final stages of the war.

b. Major activity centered on four areas: the Dinh Tuong/Long An Province border area, central Dinh Tuong, Vinh Long Province and Phong Dinh Province.

c. In the northern delta, 7th and 9th Div forces successfully repelled increasingly ambitious communist operations for most of the period. The most prominent activity centered along

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QL-4 in northern Dinh Tuong and southern Long An Province in MR 3. ARVN units consistently repulsed NVA attempts to close this vital corridor until the final weeks of the conflict. Farther south along QL-4, in central Dinh Tuong, ARVN met with similar success.

d. In Vinh Long Province, elements of two NVA/VC regiments joined an existing regiment to substantially increase the enemy threat in the province. The 16th Regiment/9th Div moved in to counter the threat in early April and communist forces were denied any significant gains.

e. In Phong Dinh Province, communist forces attempted during March and April to breach the so-called "Alpha Belt," the outer defenses of Can Tho and Binh Thuy Air Base. Units of the 21st Div countered this threat for the most part although Can Tho and Binh Thuy were shelled periodically in April.

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## SECOND CEASE-FIRE PERSPECTIVE

Note: Information depicted here covers the period from 27 December 1974, through 27 March 1975, and represents the last compilation by DAO of information received from RVNAF sources and is included here for historical purposes only.

### 1. INCIDENTS

<u>WEEK ENDING</u>	<u>MILITARY REGION</u>			
	1	2	3	4
2 Jan	200	101	243	443
9 Jan	164	143	264	514
16 Jan	200	118	231	871
23 Jan	198	93	202	652
30 Jan	309	84	198	412
6 Feb	270	92	154	497
13 Feb	217	59	113	628
20 Feb	209	95	180	468
27 Feb	250	101	197	366
6 Mar	204	161	211	329
13 Mar	521	261	279	655
20 Mar	520	168	342	863
27 Mar	286	148	224	533
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>3,548</b>	<b>1,624</b>	<b>2,838</b>	<b>7,231</b>

### 2. MAJOR ATTACKS BY FIRE

<u>WEEK ENDING</u>	<u>MILITARY REGION</u>			
	1	2	3	4
2 Jan	15	8	38	25
9 Jan	12	21	37	34
16 Jan	15	10	26	60
23 Jan	13	7	27	49
30 Jan	38	8	37	33
6 Feb	23	7	20	12
13 Feb	21	2	5	35
20 Feb	22	13	17	25
27 Feb	24	4	15	11
6 Mar	17	18	20	6
13 Mar	49	22	36	40
20 Mar	59	17	53	58
27 Mar	36	15	26	27
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>415</b>

### 3. MINOR ATTACKS BY FIRE

<u>WEEK ENDING</u>	<u>MILITARY REGION</u>			
	1	2	3	4
2 Jan	60	27	76	225
9 Jan	44	30	97	247
16 Jan	57	22	86	446
23 Jan	46	16	66	309
30 Jan	96	11	91	208
6 Feb	61	14	42	198
13 Feb	58	8	47	272
20 Feb	72	16	60	155
27 Feb	68	15	84	115
6 Mar	57	30	67	111
13 Mar	145	75	90	252
20 Mar	163	52	135	420
27 Mar	94	41	97	251
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1,021</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>1,038</b>	<b>3,209</b>

Figure 2-1

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## SECOND CEASE-FIRE PERSPECTIVE

### 4. MAJOR CONTACTS

WEEK ENDING	MILITARY REGION			
	1	2	3	4
2 Jan	2	2	13	10
9 Jan	8	9	7	24
16 Jan	7	8	12	27
23 Jan	6	0	8	27
30 Jan	8	1	7	13
6 Feb	3	3	6	14
13 Feb	10	0	4	11
20 Feb	6	3	11	8
27 Feb	6	1	8	13
6 Mar	11	11	5	4
13 Mar	25	33	11	30
20 Mar	25	14	14	32
27 Mar	11	15	14	16
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>229</b>

### 5. MINOR CONTACTS

WEEK ENDING	MILITARY REGION			
	1	2	3	4
2 Jan	123	64	116	183
9 Jan	100	83	123	209
16 Jan	133	78	107	338
23 Jan	133	70	101	267
30 Jan	167	64	63	158
6 Feb	183	68	86	273
13 Feb	128	49	57	310
20 Feb	109	63	92	280
27 Feb	152	81	110	227
6 Mar	119	102	119	208
13 Mar	302	131	143	333
20 Mar	273	85	140	353
27 Mar	145	77	87	239
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>2,055</b>	<b>1,015</b>	<b>1,344</b>	<b>3,378</b>

### 6. VNAF SORTIES SCHEDULED

WEEK ENDING	MILITARY REGION			
	1	2	3	4
2 Jan	231	219	357	210
9 Jan	221	136	811	68
16 Jan	231	144	540	376
23 Jan	216	178	536	302
30 Jan	180	116	532	392
6 Feb	186	254	414	382
13 Feb	270	342	331	291
20 Feb	210	226	292	314
27 Feb	210	212	334	234
6 Mar	244	275	340	254
13 Mar	254	518	420	280
20 Mar	350	718	604	212
27 Mar	350	652	472	247
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>3,153</b>	<b>3,990</b>	<b>5,983</b>	<b>3,562</b>

### 7. VNAF SORTIES FLOWN

WEEK ENDING	MILITARY REGION			
	1	2	3	4
2 Jan	0	101	327	154
9 Jan	0	85	667	51
16 Jan	10	186	448	324
23 Jan	44	119	462	298
30 Jan	131	77	435	170
6 Feb	229	201	335	340
13 Feb	171	157	214	232
20 Feb	169	138	135	274
27 Feb	174	132	256	214
6 Mar	296	224	239	210
13 Mar	305	606	345	269
20 Mar	213	579	485	193
27 Mar	178	500	298	205
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1,920</b>	<b>3,105</b>	<b>4,646</b>	<b>2,934</b>

Figure 2-2

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## SECOND CEASE-FIRE PERSPECTIVE

### 8. ENEMY ARTILLERY INCOMING

WEEK ENDING	MILITARY REGION			
	1	2	3	4
2 Jan	1,473	637	3,127	2,156
9 Jan	799	1,429	4,443	2,096
16 Jan	1,324	1,054	1,307	4,166
23 Jan	922	318	1,669	3,388
30 Jan	1,736	353	1,697	2,423
6 Feb	1,241	424	1,180	1,430
13 Feb	1,095	94	474	2,764
20 Feb	1,334	752	1,202	1,539
27 Feb	1,470	199	1,122	860
6 Mar	1,291	531	1,533	764
13 Mar	4,510	1,372	1,849	2,732
20 Mar	3,353	1,017	5,119	4,255
27 Mar	2,486	1,762	1,819	1,978
TOTALS	23,034	9,942	26,541	30,551

### 9. FRIENDLY ARTILLERY OUTGOING

WEEK ENDING	MILITARY REGION			
	1	2	3	4
2 Jan	22,456	13,452	30,307	22,404
9 Jan	14,029	25,922	26,677	23,952
16 Jan	13,463	18,895	20,475	40,903
23 Jan	24,844	13,849	23,268	27,750
30 Jan	32,739	10,386	20,722	23,362
6 Feb	24,081	9,305	14,304	25,026
13 Feb	35,977	7,147	9,707	23,251
20 Feb	40,261	7,124	12,924	18,748
27 Feb	44,871	6,909	14,165	19,176
6 Mar	43,063	21,215	18,308	16,582
13 Mar	73,285	52,712	25,708	38,368
20 Mar	95,871	28,947	52,941	48,032
27 Mar	61,215	33,928	37,346	31,726
TOTALS	526,155	249,791	306,852	359,280

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## SECOND CEASE-FIRE PERSPECTIVE

### 10. FRIENDLY: KILLED IN ACTION

WEEK ENDING	MILITARY REGION			
	1	2	3	4
2 Jan	78	31	69	90
9 Jan	118	71	74	104
16 Jan	60	39	85	215
23 Jan	51	56	89	235
30 Jan	85	29	57	85
6 Feb	79	46	44	62
13 Feb	114	13	65	137
20 Feb	110	38	143	41
27 Feb	53	18	58	70
6 Mar	39	49	56	83
13 Mar	222	114	114	125
20 Mar	184	56	134	293
27 Mar	73	56	107	117
TOTALS	1,266	616	1,095	1,657

### 11. FRIENDLY: WOUNDED IN ACTION

WEEK ENDING	MILITARY REGION			
	1	2	3	4
2 Jan	256	75	185	322
9 Jan	250	146	301	379
16 Jan	269	161	195	846
23 Jan	172	93	204	648
30 Jan	422	63	192	353
6 Feb	333	123	186	421
13 Feb	291	57	114	511
20 Feb	395	104	199	295
27 Feb	349	66	196	316
6 Mar	243	175	239	260
13 Mar	669	332	320	497
20 Mar	734	269	436	968
27 Mar	255	222	415	409
TOTALS	4,638	1,886	3,182	6,225

### 12. ENEMY: KILLED IN ACTION

WEEK ENDING	MILITARY REGION			
	1	2	3	4
2 Jan	208	101	553	726
9 Jan	151	568	694	346
16 Jan	236	752	627	1,139
23 Jan	389	292	414	551
30 Jan	408	152	315	382
6 Feb	329	237	406	605
13 Feb	472	87	232	712
20 Feb	275	210	304	575
27 Feb	276	153	255	821
6 Mar	299	439	351	385
13 Mar	1,535	1,770	517	809
20 Mar	961	783	980	975
27 Mar	540	866	1,333	512
TOTALS	6,079	6,410	6,981	8,538

### 13. ENEMY: DETAINED IN ACTION

WEEK ENDING	MILITARY REGION			
	1	2	3	4
2 Jan	22	3	4	8
9 Jan	5	3	2	8
16 Jan	20	4	0	8
23 Jan	17	14	2	0
30 Jan	88	11	5	1
6 Feb	97	6	0	3
13 Feb	50	1	2	14
20 Feb	9	3	1	13
27 Feb	51	9	3	10
6 Mar	14	6	6	59
13 Mar	88	4	12	5
20 Mar	20	8	7	5
27 Mar	11	7	8	2
TOTALS	492	79	52	136

Figure 2-4

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SECOND CEASE-FIRE PERSPECTIVE14. CIVILIAN KILLED IN ACTION

<u>WEEK</u> <u>ENDING</u>	<u>MILITARY REGION</u>			
	1	2	3	4
2 Jan	9	6	22	39
9 Jan	4	5	23	41
16 Jan	5	5	22	57
23 Jan	5	9	9	70
30 Jan	11	11	20	41
6 Feb	12	6	26	31
13 Feb	14	8	13	40
20 Feb	1	2	8	21
27 Feb	3	10	20	42
6 Mar	9	21	8	24
13 Mar	21	4	20	46
20 Mar	24	21	44	126
27 Mar	12	12	23	29
TOTALS	130	120	258	607

15. CIVILIAN WOUNDED IN ACTION

<u>WEEK</u> <u>ENDING</u>	<u>MILITARY REGION</u>			
	1	2	3	4
2 Jan	14	16	44	126
9 Jan	5	17	62	157
16 Jan	6	12	52	220
23 Jan	9	12	48	137
30 Jan	27	45	68	162
6 Feb	11	17	38	105
13 Feb	22	7	7	82
20 Feb	10	3	24	57
27 Feb	12	44	27	69
6 Mar	29	34	21	57
13 Mar	55	82	103	102
20 Mar	49	45	107	357
27 Mar	33	78	71	78
TOTALS	282	412	672	1,709

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## CHAPTER 3

### REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM ARMED FORCES (RVNAF) INTELLIGENCE CAPABILITIES

#### 1. (S/NFD) RVNAF JOINT GENERAL STAFF (JGS), J2.

a. Organization. (Figure 3-1)

b. Personnel. The strength \* of J2 for the reporting period:

	<u>AUTH</u>	<u>ACTUAL</u>
Officers	156	121
NCO's	102	92
EM	<u>30</u>	<u>20</u>
TOTAL	288	233

c. *Operational Effectiveness.* The effectiveness of the J2 decreased in direct proportion to the success of the enemy offensive. By mid-March information from Military Regions (MR's) 1 and 2 was sporadic, and eventually ceased as corps and division G2's dissolved or were evacuated. Accurate and timely intelligence, although at reduced levels, continued to be received from MR's 3 and 4 until Operation FREQUENT WIND was executed. The RVNAF intelligence community, and the J2 in particular, were blamed by President Thieu for not providing sufficient warning of the enemy's move to and subsequent attack at Ban Me Thuot. Despite the unfairness of this judgment, the President lost confidence in his J2. Morale plummeted to new lows in the J2's organization. The J2 was not consulted when the President made the disastrous decision to evacuate the highlands.

#### 2. (S/NFD) UNIT 306.

a. Organization. (Figure 3-2) Unit 306 was the RVNAF designator for the former Military Intelligence Center comprised of four intelligence divisions: Division 1 (Intelligence); Division 2 (Document Exploitation); Division 3 (Interrogation) and Division 4 (Materiel Exploitation). Logistics and administrative support were provided by Division 5.

\*Strength figures for all RVNAF intelligence agencies are last known official or best estimate figures available to the DAO as of 1 March 1975.

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b. Personnel. The strength of Unit 306 was:

	<u>AUTH</u>			<u>ACTUAL</u>		
	OFF	NCO	EM	OFF	NCO	EM
DIV 1	58	59	24	45	53	20
DIV 2	29	27	13	24	31	09
DIV 3	49	26	17	46	21	12
DIV 4	13	31	05	13	26	05
DIV 5	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>37</u>
TOTAL	159	153	102	128	151	83

c. Operational Effectiveness.

(1) Division 1 (Intelligence): The Intelligence Division was affected in much the same way as the J2 by the disruption in the flow of information caused by the fall of MR's 1 and 2. The evacuation from the highlands and the subsequent loss of territory to the enemy significantly degraded the operational effectiveness of the Intelligence Division. Initial reaction was one of disbelief in the events of mid-March, with eventual resignation to the reality of the military situation. After 20 April, the reporting from Division 1 was barely satisfactory.

(2) Division 2 (Document Exploitation): The offensive in MR's 1 and 2 all but eliminated reporting from those MR's. Documents captured by withdrawing forces were exploited in the field and because of lack of available transportation to Saigon, were destroyed or left in place. Some excerpts of significant documents continued to be passed to the J2. By 10 April, transportation priorities and the unstable military situation curtailed the removal of all but the most significant documents from MR's 3 and 4. The problem of transmitting captured documents from the field to Division 2 had been a continuing one which was never adequately resolved and which became acute during the enemy build-up prior to the final offensive.

(3) Division 3 (Interrogation): Division 3 was responsible for interrogating selected Prisoners of War (PW) and ralliers sent to Saigon by the Corps Interrogation Centers in each MR. The primary interrogation center for the J2, Division 3, did not have operational control over the four Corps Centers. Each Center was responsible

# SECRET NOFORN DISSEM

for forwarding all PW/ralliers and field interrogation reports to the Interrogation Division. This forwarding system proved slow but workable until the offensives in MR's 1 and 2. Withdrawing RVNAF units were either not capturing prisoners or had no means to evacuate them.

(4) Division 4 (Materiel Exploitation): Virtually no materiel was returned to Saigon from MR's 1 and 2. MR's 3 and 4 continued to capture equipment but because of RVNAF transportation limitations equipment was often destroyed in place or was not readily accessible to technical intelligence personnel. Division 4's technical intelligence capability remained limited to weapons and fragment identification. The Division remained dependent on US agencies for any in-depth analysis of captured equipment. The dependency on the RVNAF Central Logistics Command (CLC) to provide unique captured equipment to Division 4 often delayed delivery of equipment.

(5) Overall Effectiveness of Unit 306: Until mid-March, Unit 306 showed a high degree of proficiency. Even after the fall of the highlands, individual units maintained a state of professionalism until the initiation of the FREQUENT WIND evacuation. The fall of Phuoc Long Province, the first province given up in its entirety, combined with the disorganized evacuation from the central highlands in March, created a serious morale problem. As the evacuating RVNAF units reached Tuy Hoa, morale began to improve in most units but quickly declined as additional territory continued to be conceded and new North Vietnamese Army (NVA) reserve divisions were confirmed in the Republic of Vietnam (RVN).

### 3. (S/NFD) CAPITAL MILITARY DISTRICT (CMD).

a. Organization. (Figure 3-3) The CMD provided timely intelligence on enemy activities in the Saigon/Gia Dinh area (except Rung Sat Special Zone) and was organized into 11 sections and a military intelligence detachment. In addition, it had 10 special reconnaissance teams which operated in Gia Dinh Sector. The CMD was also augmented by reconnaissance teams from the Strategic Technical Directorate (STD), JGS, as well as other special units on an "as needed" basis. The CMD had its own agent net operating throughout its area of responsibility, which provided reliable information on the activities of VC guerilla units and infrastructure.

b. Personnel. Not available.

c. Operational Effectiveness. CMD/G2 continued to operate in a professional manner. Some of the operational sections were augmented in an attempt to increase security. During the initial phases of the offensive, personnel went on full alert and remained

# SECRET NOFORN DISSEM

at CMD HQ 24 hours a day. CMD/G2 conducted refresher training courses for Military Intelligence officers and NCO's, improved the early warning system around Saigon, reorganized defense plans, assisted CMD/G3 in sweep operations and continued daily platoon and company sized reconnaissance operations. Effectiveness of the unit during the final phase of evacuation is not known; however, as of 10 April, the unit was actively conducting operations in Saigon and its environs.

#### 4. (S/NFD) CORPS AND DIVISION G2's.

a. Corps Organization. Corps headquarters were organized under a common Table of Organization and Equipment (TOE) which provided for a G2 office plus an intelligence section and a G2 air section. The G2 was supported by a military intelligence detachment and interrogation center, both organized under a separate TOE.

b. Corps Personnel. Authorized strength, including the military intelligence detachment and corps interrogation center, was 54 officers and 110 enlisted men. Actual strength is unknown.

c. Corps Operational Effectiveness. In each corps, the position of G2 was held by an experienced and dedicated intelligence officer who had served in that capacity and in the MR for a long time. Training and experience of assigned persons were generally satisfactory and were major factors contributing to effective corps operations. Limitations imposed on surface transportation, aircraft and communications hampered exploitation of prisoners, ralliers, documents, and aerial photography. Low morale and limited motivation in the junior ranks tended to degrade overall effectiveness.

d. Division Organization. Division G2 offices were organized under a common TOE that provided for an office of the G2, an intelligence section, and a G2 air section. Also attached to each division was a military intelligence detachment organized under its own TOE.

e. Division Personnel. Authorized division strength, including the attached military intelligence elements, was 15 officers and 48 enlisted men. Actual strength is unknown.

#### f. Division Operational Effectiveness.

(1) The operational effectiveness of division G2 elements remained generally good. Despite some signs of apprehension, the intelligence produced continued to be fairly accurate and reliable; it was disseminated in a timely manner.

# SECRET NOFORN DISSEM

(2) A high percentage of the senior officers in these staff elements had offshore and formal in-country intelligence training. A large number of NCO's also had in-country training, but the junior enlisted men generally had little or no formal training. Offshore training was no longer available and in-country training had been reduced.

(3) Overall Effectiveness of the G2 Staffs. The deterioration of morale caused by the worsening military and economic situation eventually affected all G2 staffs. By late March, personnel were concerned with daily living/family problems to the detriment of professional matters. Previous heavy reliance on modern technology for collection and exploitation also created problems. Many of those modern systems were withdrawn or had physically deteriorated; in other cases, their use was curtailed because of lack of money. Air reconnaissance and aerial photography were most seriously affected and were of major concern to field commanders and their G2 staffs. During the final offensive, there was a deterioration in the flow of information to and from subordinate units. In both MR's 1 and 2, after the initial communist thrust, the Corps G2's never fully reestablished communications with sources previously providing information.

## 5. (S/NFD) MILITARY SECURITY SERVICE (MSS).

a. Organization. The Military Security Directorate, located in Saigon, was the headquarters element of the MSS. In addition to the Capital Military District unit, field offices were maintained in each of the provinces and major cities. A contingent of six persons made up the sub-field office within each district. Also, units of 30 and 25 officers and enlisted men were assigned to each corps and division. MSS personnel were also attached to regiments, battalions, companies and platoons.

b. Personnel. The strength of MSS was:

	<u>AUTH</u>	<u>ACTUAL</u>
Officers	1,034	1,059
NCO's	2,198	2,013
EM	<u>1,096</u>	<u>1,019</u>
TOTAL	4,328	4,091

c. Operational Effectiveness. The MSS, a joint service organization, was the counterintelligence arm of the RVNAF. It was subordinate to the General Political Warfare Department, not the J2,

# SECRET NOFORN DISSEM

Joint General Staff. Its mission embodied the full scope of responsibilities associated with counterintelligence (counter-sabotage, countersubversion and counterespionage). As a by-product of its counterintelligence operations, it collected information on enemy order of battle and intentions and serviced the requirements of tactical commands. MSS operations in conjunction with the National Police were effective in neutralizing VC/NVA proselyting and espionage until 26 April. MSS operations were conducted in only those areas controlled by the Government of Vietnam (GVN).

## 6. (S/NFD) UNIT 101.

a. Function. Under the operational control of J2, Unit 101, JGS/RVNAF, organized and directed in-country and cross-border military intelligence collection operations.

### b. Personnel.

	<u>AUTH</u>	<u>ACTUAL</u>
Officers	395	333
NCO's	305	256
EM	<u>174</u>	<u>146</u>
TOTAL	874	735

c. Operational Effectiveness. Unit 101 was the ARVN military intelligence collection group. It had country-wide and foreign (primarily Cambodia) responsibility for collecting tactical and strategic military intelligence against VC/NVA targets in support of the JGS, corps, sectors, and ARVN field units. Redirection of efforts in January, from essentially tactical collection operations in support of field units to long-range strategic penetrations, resulted in some disruption of operations. The reorganization, redirection and retargeting of Unit 101 assets and operations had been expected to result in more valuable and useful intelligence reporting. Unit 101 lost approximately half of its collection capability due to the withdrawal of contact personnel from the northern two MR's. Collection continued in the rest of RVN until 29 April.

## 7. (S/NFD) VIETNAMESE NAVY INTELLIGENCE.

### a. N2.

SECRET NOFORN DISSEM

(1) Organization. The N2 was an operational staff section of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations with four main branches: Administrative/Personnel, Hydrographic Mapping, Intelligence and Exploitation. Its mission was to analyze information received from coastal zone headquarters and other RVN intelligence agencies and to provide estimates of communist intentions.

(2) Personnel.

	<u>AUTH</u>	<u>ACTUAL</u>
Officers	42	15
Petty Officers	24	18
Seamen	<u>15</u>	<u>12</u>
TOTAL	81	45

(3) Operational Effectiveness. The N2 headquarters staff had an interrogation team which could be dispatched to exploit targets of opportunity. The team had the capability to interrogate in Vietnamese, Chinese, Cambodian, and Thai as well as to exploit foreign documents and materiel. The N2 was always limited in its collection and analytic capabilities; by 20 April the N2 had ceased to function as an intelligence organization.

b. Unit 701: Special Collection Detachment (SCD).

(1) Organization. The headquarters element of the Detachment consisted of a command section and three branches: Operations, Signal and Support. It had two covert field elements. The covert field elements had, at the end, five collection teams composed of agent handlers and informants. Contact was lost with a sixth team in mid-March.

(2) Personnel. Strength as of 1 March was:

	<u>AUTH</u>	<u>ACTUAL</u>
Officers	50	69
Petty Officers	62	149
Seamen	<u>09</u>	<u>16</u>
TOTAL	121	234

# SECRET NOFORN DISSEM

(3) Operational Effectiveness. During the period the collection effort was redirected with emphasis changing from tactical intelligence obtained by visual means to the recruitment of agents in the ranks of the VC/NVA to gather intelligence on enemy plans and intentions. The loss of collection assets in MR's 1 and 2 in late March rendered Unit 701 ineffective by 10 April.

## 8. (S/NFD) VIETNAMESE AIR FORCE (VNAF) DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE (DOI).

a. Organization. The DOI included a Collection Branch, Target Branch, Air Photo Center, and a Special Collection Detachment.

b. Personnel.

	<u>AUTH</u>	<u>ACTUAL</u>
Officers	249	220
NCO & EM	<u>389</u>	<u>300</u>
TOTAL	638	520

c. Operational Effectiveness.

(1) VNAF Special Collection Unit. During the reporting period this Unit, under the operational control of the DOI, had been providing HUMINT on Cambodia, and to a lesser extent the GVN in MR's 3 and 4. In early March this effort was redirected to emphasize collection in MR's 3 and 4. Of the five projects during the last period, four were finished by 1 April. Collection against VNAF-interest targets (air defense systems, troop and vehicle concentrations and enemy intentions) ceased as of 5 April.

(2) Air Photo Center (APC). The VNAF photo intelligence collection effort continued to be hindered by reduced fuel allocations and flying hours for VNAF photo reconnaissance aircraft. The photo reconnaissance capability was also degraded by the increased air defense threat. VNAF continued to be hampered by a limited number of reconnaissance aircraft, their vulnerability to enemy fire and the inadequacy of the camera system. Until April, VNAF was providing photo coverage over MR's 3 and 4 with partial coverage of southern MR 2. The RVN continued to rely on the US BUFFALO HUNTER for its coverage of denied areas. Despite several attempts to improve VNAF's

# SECRET NOFORN DISSEM

reconnaissance program, the major problem continued to be camera systems, especially the KS-92, 70 mm framing camera mounted in the RF-5. There was a requirement for a panoramic camera with higher operating altitude and greater resolution which was adaptable to the RF-5 aircraft. In photo exploitation, the APC continued to be plagued with inadequate and obsolete equipment. Good imagery interpreters maintained high standards of professionalism despite aging equipment and unsatisfactory working conditions.

## 9. (S/NFD) SIGNAL INTELLIGENCE (SIGINT).

a. The J7, Directorate General for Technical Services, was responsible for RVNAF SIGINT collection and for providing timely intelligence to field commanders. It served in a dual capacity as a staff element of the JGS and as an organization directly responsible to the Office of the President.

b. One ARVN special technical detachment was assigned to each infantry division and to the airborne, marine, and ranger commands. Corps processing centers were located in each MR. The rapid deterioration in MR's 1 and 2 effectively halted J7 operations in these areas by late March.

c. The airborne radio direction finding program was comprised of 30 aircraft which continued to fly 13 missions a day until 29 April. However, by early March mission aircraft were directed to operate off the coast of NVN, thus seriously degrading their capability.

10. (S/NFD) SUMMARY. RVNAF intelligence services were manned by highly professional persons who attempted to continue operations until the last days in April. Communist successes in the northern part of the RVN eliminated the capabilities to collect intelligence in those areas, and heavy air defense systems effectively prevented the use of reconnaissance aircraft. Despite communist military gains which lowered morale, units continued to produce intelligence, although timeliness and quality were adversely affected.

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## CHAPTER 4

### RVNAF FORCE STRUCTURE

1. (C) GENERAL. An essential corollary to the reduction in Defense Assistance, Vietnam (DAV) funding has been a restructuring of Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) despite the increased high level of combat. In an effort to strip out the less important units and concentrate maximum support to combat units, during this reporting period, the Joint General Staff (JGS) made numerous force structure changes to make maximum use of manpower and materiel.

2. (C) FORCE STRUCTURE CHANGES. There were numerous force structure changes during the period. The most significant were:

a. Activations:

-- 4th Airborne Brigade (less TOW missile detachment) effective 1 Jan 75

-- 468th Marine Brigade (less TOW missile detachment) effective 1 Jan 75

-- 2 artillery batteries, 105mm (1 for 4th Airborne Brigade; 1 for 468th Marine Brigade) effective 1 Jan 75

-- Bong Son Sub-Sector Dispensary effective 31 Jan 75

-- Long Binh Dispensary effective 1 Mar 75

-- 9th Ranger Group effective 1 Mar 75

-- 3 scout detachments (820th, 821st, 822nd), (81st Airborne Ranger Group) effective 1 Mar 75

-- Sector medical section for each sector (44 sectors) effective 1 Jan 75

b. Deactivations:

-- Tam Quan Sub-Sector Dispensary effective 31 Jan 75

-- 340th Direct Support Group effective 15 Feb 75

-- Preservation battalion, 340th Direct Support Group (less 2 companies transferred to 341st Direct Support Group) effective 15 Feb 75

-- Storage battalion, 340th Direct Support Group effective 15 Feb 75

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-- Transportation company, 340th Direct Support Group effective 15 Feb 75

-- 4 V-100 detachments, military police effective 28 Feb 75

-- 5 regional force battalions (RF Bn) effective 31 Mar 75

-- 2 regional force companies (Separate) (RF Co) (Sep) effective 31 Mar 75

## c. Reorganizations:

-- All armored cavalry squadrons, armored brigades effective 1 Mar 75

-- All armored cavalry squadrons, infantry divisions effective 1 Mar 75

## d. Summary:

-- The 4th Airborne Brigade was identical in organization to the existing airborne brigades with the exception that the new brigade would not have a TOW missile detachment. The target date for completion of equipping and training units of the brigade was 1 April 1975.

-- Reorganization of armored cavalry squadrons began on 1 March 1975 and was to be completed by 30 June 1975 for all organic armored cavalry squadrons of armored brigades. Reorganization of armored cavalry squadrons organic to infantry divisions was to be completed by 31 July 1975. Reorganization of the armored cavalry squadrons was to provide increased combat capability and combat essential support in armor/infantry operations.

-- Activation of the 9th Ranger Group commenced on 1 March 1975. The target date for completion of equipping, training and employment was 1 June. The 9th Ranger Group was organized the same as other ranger groups with a headquarters, headquarters and service company, 1 artillery battery, 105mm, 1 reconnaissance company and 3 battalions. The 9th Ranger Group, when trained, was to become a part of the general reserve.

-- Activation of 3 additional scout detachments subordinate to the 81st Airborne Ranger Group gave the group a total of 9 scout detachments and a configuration and strength similar to an infantry regiment. The new detachments would have provided increased combat capability and flexibility to conduct several operations simultaneously.

3. (C) PLANNED FUTURE FORCE STRUCTURE CHANGES. JGS/J3 submitted

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for presidential approval other force structure changes as follows:

- Augment 45 RF mobile gp hq by 17 spaces
- Activate 45 RF recon co, 118 spaces each
- Activate 17 additional RF bns, 556 spaces each
- Activate 6 RF co (Sep), 118 spaces each
- Activate 76 PF platoons, 29 spaces each
- Activate 18 armor inf units, 210 spaces
- Activate 1 ranger group, 2,186 spaces
- Activate 1 artillery battery, 105mm, 79 spaces
- Activate 3 marine battalions, 2,625 spaces
- Activate 1 ranger recon co, 111 spaces
- Activate 3 airborne battalions, 2,595 spaces

Formal approval of these proposed changes was never received. Final changes and implementation were overtaken by events in the final effort for survival.

4. (C) CHANGES DURING LATE MARCH AND APRIL. After the evacuation of Danang and Nha Trang, several reconstitution and resupply actions were taken by RVNAF in a final attempt to stop the progress of the NVA forces. Specific comments on these actions are addressed in depth in Chapter 5 under the RECONSTITUTION OF ARVN FORCES section. The employment of reconstituted and resupplied units is addressed in Chapters 1 and 3.

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## CHAPTER 5

### VIETNAMESE ARMY (ARVN)

1. (C) AUTHORIZED AND ASSIGNED STRENGTH. The authorized and assigned strengths of the ARVN combat arms components, as of 28 February 1975, follow:

<u>COMPONENT</u>	<u>AUTH</u>	<u>ASSIGNED</u>	<u>% AUTH</u>
ALL ARVN DIV	161,884	132,312	82%
AIRBORNE	16,609	13,244	80%
RANGERS	29,686	29,745	100% (plus)
MARINES	<u>20,353</u>	<u>16,802</u>	<u>83%</u>
TOTAL	228,532	192,103	84%

(Figure 5-1)

2. (C) AREAS OF OPERATION (AO). (Figure 5-2)

a. Military Region (MR) 1 was divided into five division AO's. Assignments were stable for the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, Airborne (Abn) and Marine Divisions (Div) until mid-March 1975, when the Abn Div was ordered to return to MR 3 by President Nguyen Van Thieu for use in the defense of Saigon. The MR 1 Commander, Lieutenant General (LTG) Ngo Quang Truong, protested the decision, but was overruled. LTG Truong was in the process of shuffling forces to cover the void created by the departing Abn Div when the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) attacked.

b. In MR 2, the 22nd Div's primary AO was Binh Dinh Province, although elements of the division were on call to deploy to the highlands to reinforce ARVN forces there. The 23rd Div's AO was the highland provinces of Pleiku, Darlac and Quang Duc. The Ranger (Rgr) Command was largely concentrated in Kontum Province, with some elements moving to other highland provinces to reinforce.

c. MR 3 was comprised of five AO's: Capital Military District (CMD), Rgr Command and the 5th, 18th and 25th Div's. Substantial restructuring and deployment of remnants of former units, evacuated from MR 1 and MR 2, took place during April, but the primary AO responsibilities remained intact until the end.

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d. MR 4 division AO's for the 7th, 9th and 21st Div's remained essentially unchanged from those reported in the previous assessment. Some shifts took place in January to respond to communist "high point" activity. Commencing in late March, until the surrender on 30 April, the primary AO's remained unchanged. Infusion of restructured and reconstituted units from MR's 1 and 2 into the 7th and 9th Divisions' AO's allowed these units to detach adjacent elements for yeoman service with the 21st Div, particularly at Can Tho and Binh Thuy.

e. As of 28 February locations of tactical units, regiments and above, are shown in Figures 5-3, 5-4, 5-5, 5-6, and 5-7.

### 3. (C) COMBAT ARMS.

#### a. Combat Divisions:

(1) The Vietnamese Marine Corps (VNMC) Division remained committed early in the year in defensive positions along the northernmost defense line in MR 1, in southern Quang Tri and northern Thua Thien Provinces.

(a) A new marine brigade (Bde), the 468th, was formed by late January. The 468th Bde deployed by ship to Saigon on 2 February, where it was assigned a reserve role for the defense of Saigon. It was briefly committed in Long An Province in April.

(b) As of 12 February, the Division's mission was to defend in Quang Tri and Thua Thien; to delay, if forced to withdraw, and to defend Hue.

(c) On 12 March, the Abn Div was ordered to deploy from Da Nang to Saigon. The Corps Commander was told that the defense of Da Nang was top priority in MR 1. Accordingly, the 369th Marine Bde began moving from Thua Thien Province to relieve the 1st Abn Bde west of Dai Loc District Town, Quang Nam. At the same time, communist forces launched heavy attacks against the 4th and 5th Battalions (Bns)/ 147th Bde northwest of Hue. On 17 March, the 258th Bde deployed to southern Thua Thien Province to replace the departing 2nd Abn Bde. The following day the Division HQ relocated from northern Thua Thien to Marble Mountain Airfield, southeast of Da Nang.

(d) The 147th Bde deployed to southern Thua Thien Province where it was ordered to assist in the defense of Hue. That order was then reversed and the brigade was destroyed as it attempted to march southward toward Da Nang. Most of the 258th and 369th Bde marines were evacuated through Tan My Port to Da Nang, but nearly all heavy equipment was lost. The surviving elements began the futile effort to defend Da Nang.

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**AREAS OF OPERATION**

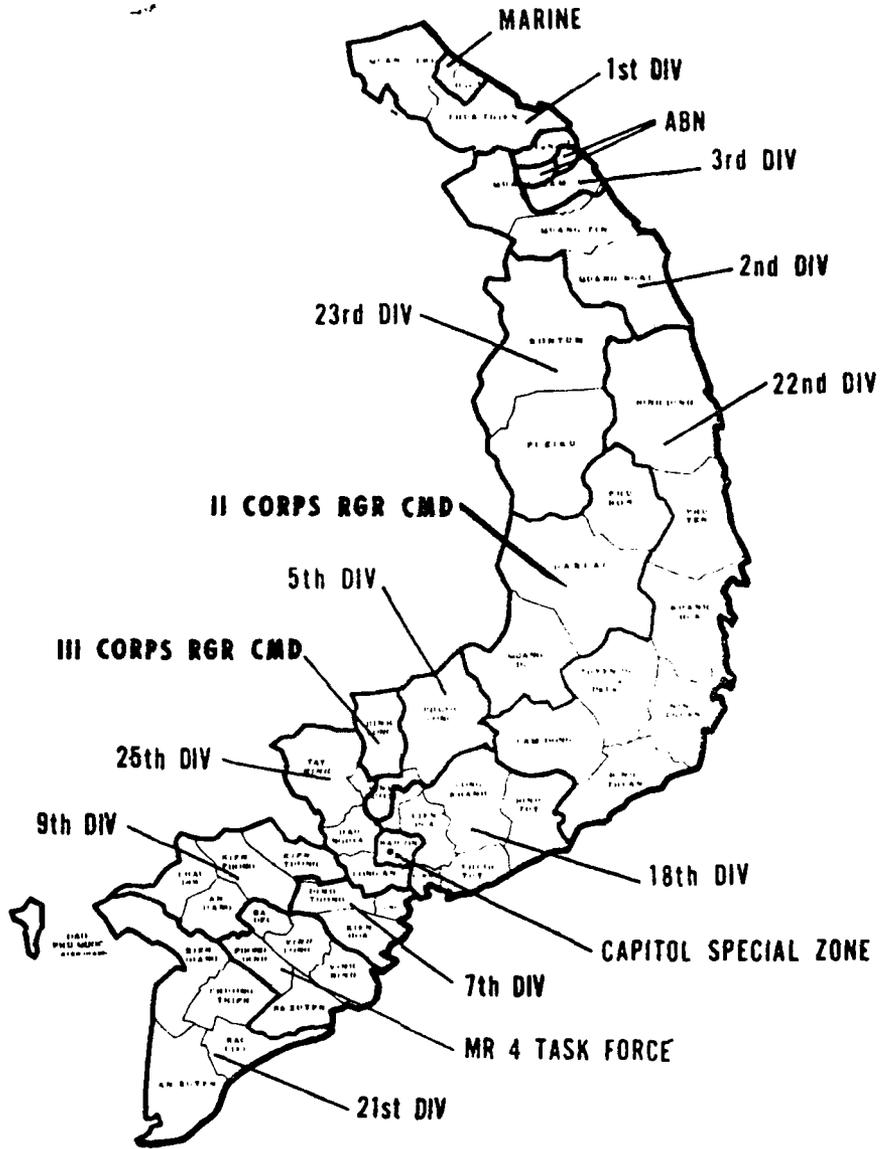


Figure 5-2

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**ARVN**

**MR 1**

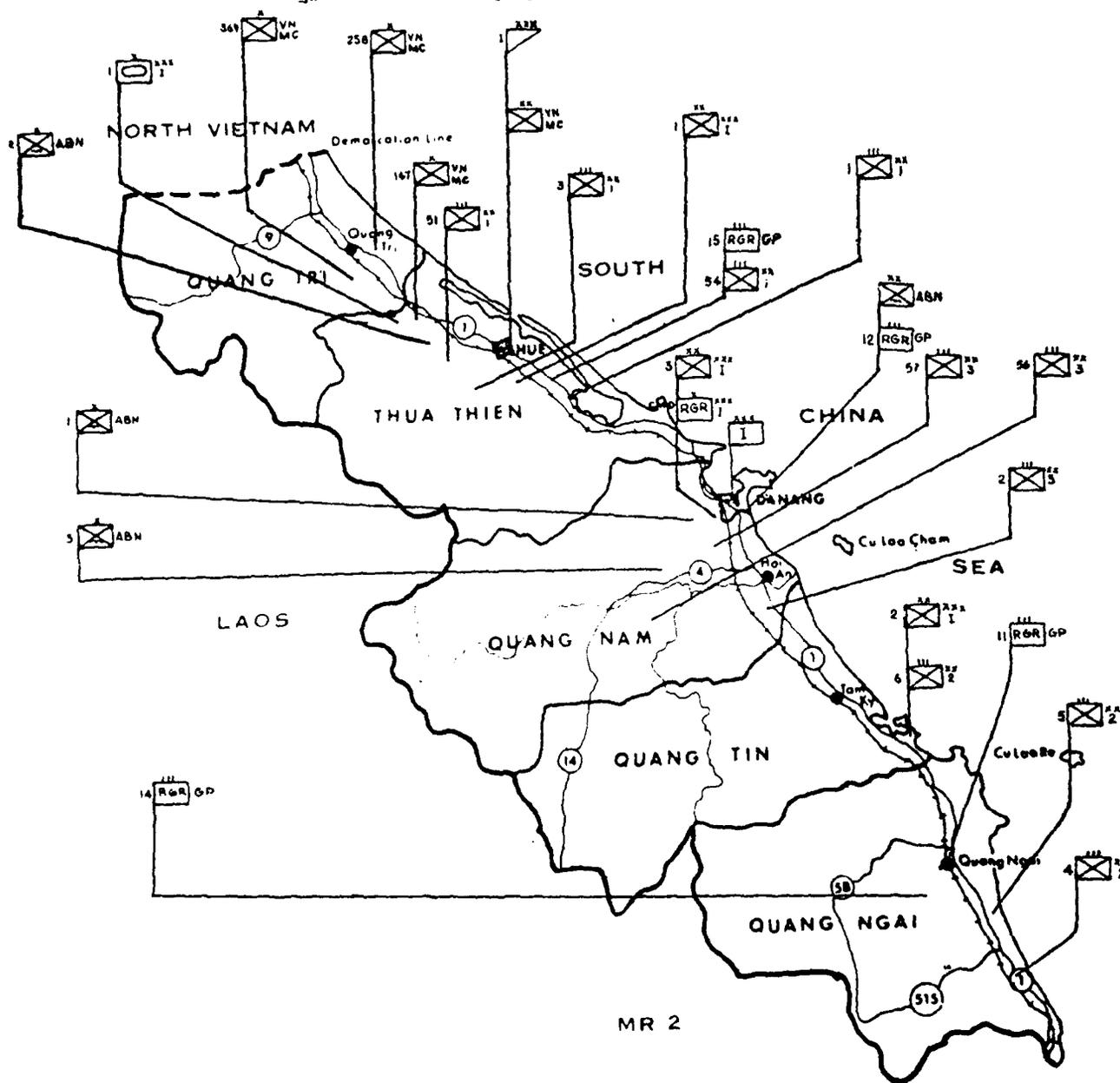


Figure 5-3

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## ARVN

### MR 2

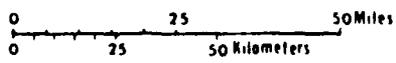
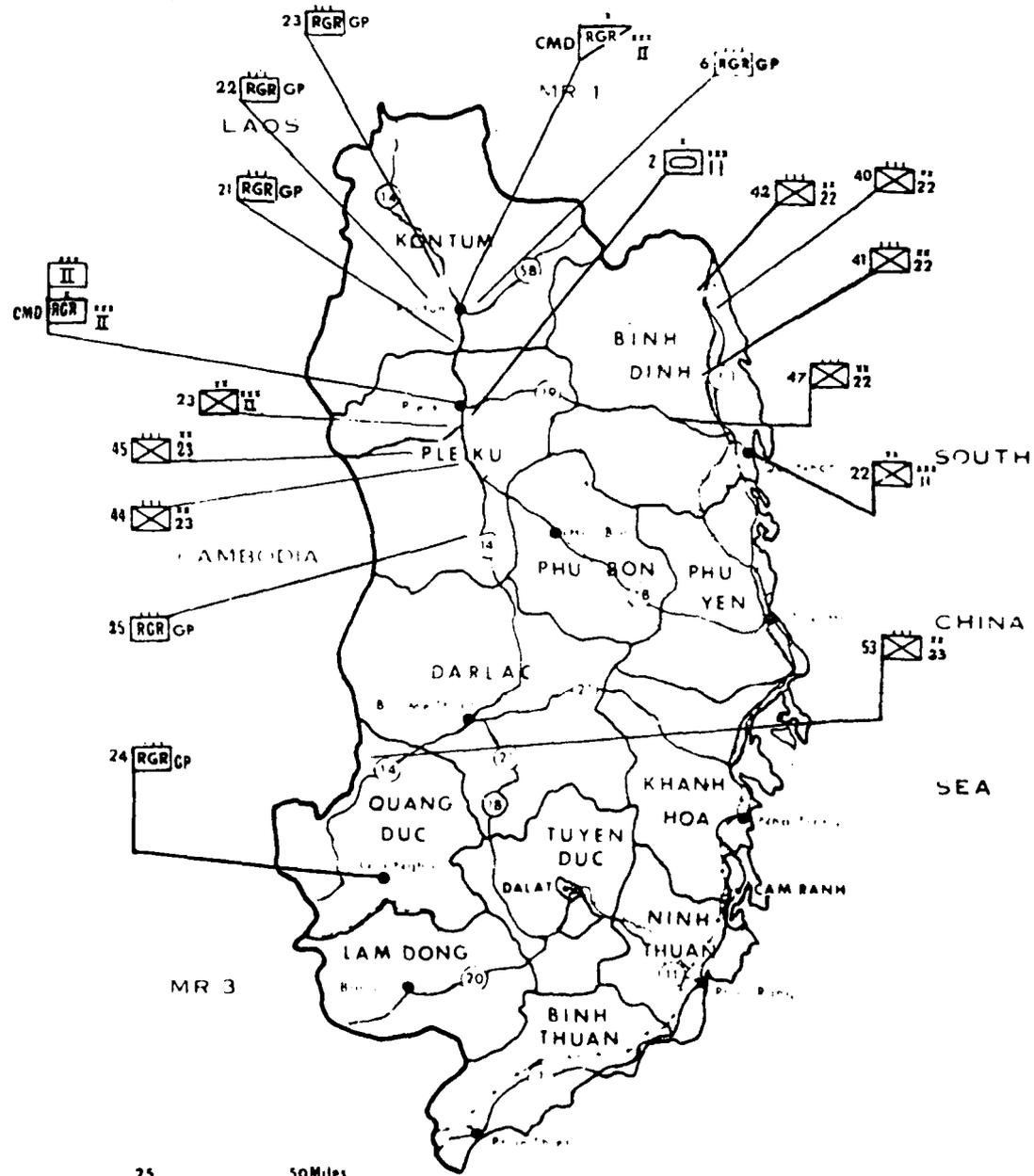


Figure 5-4

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**ARVN**

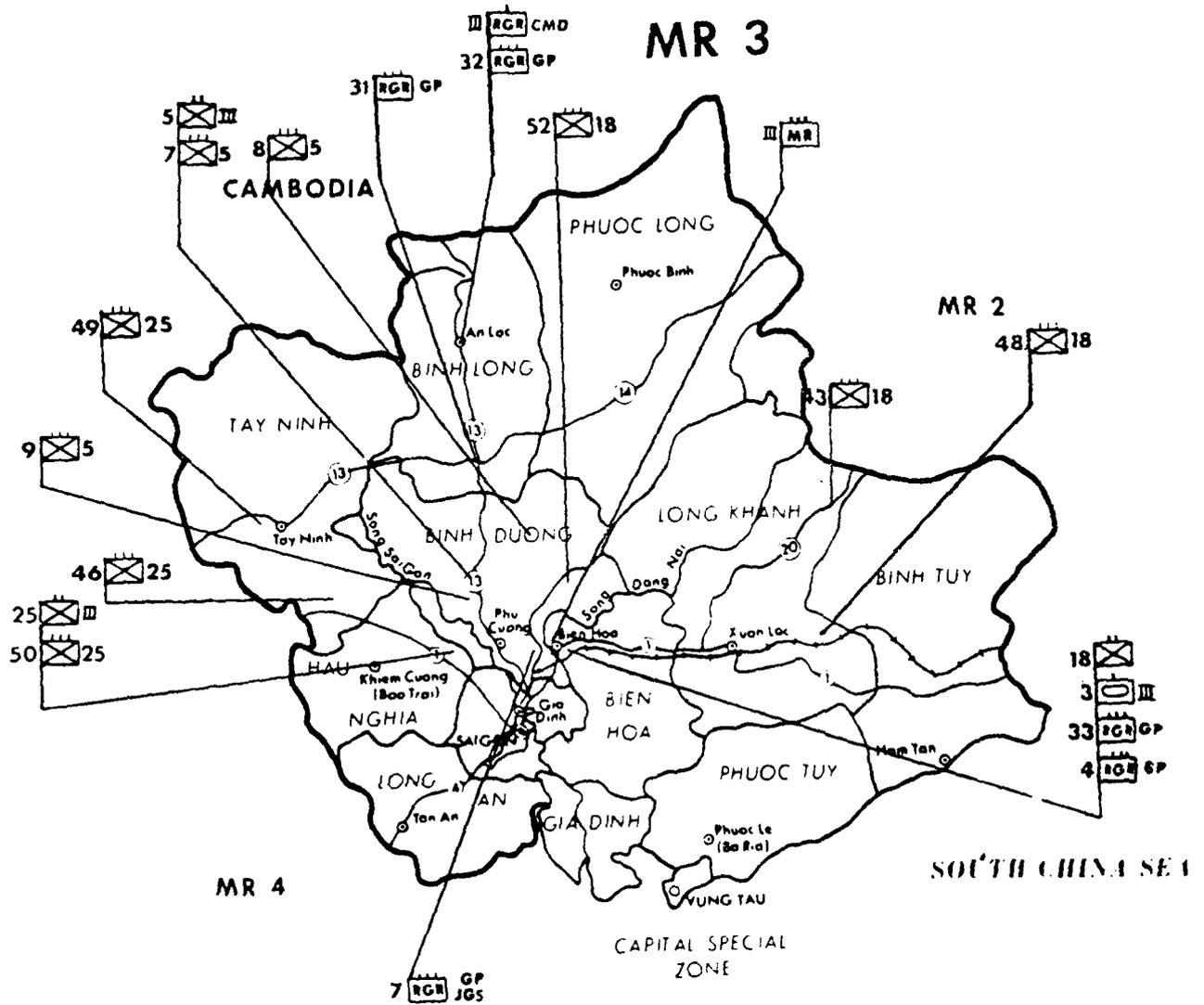


Figure 5-5

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## RANGER DISPOSITIONS

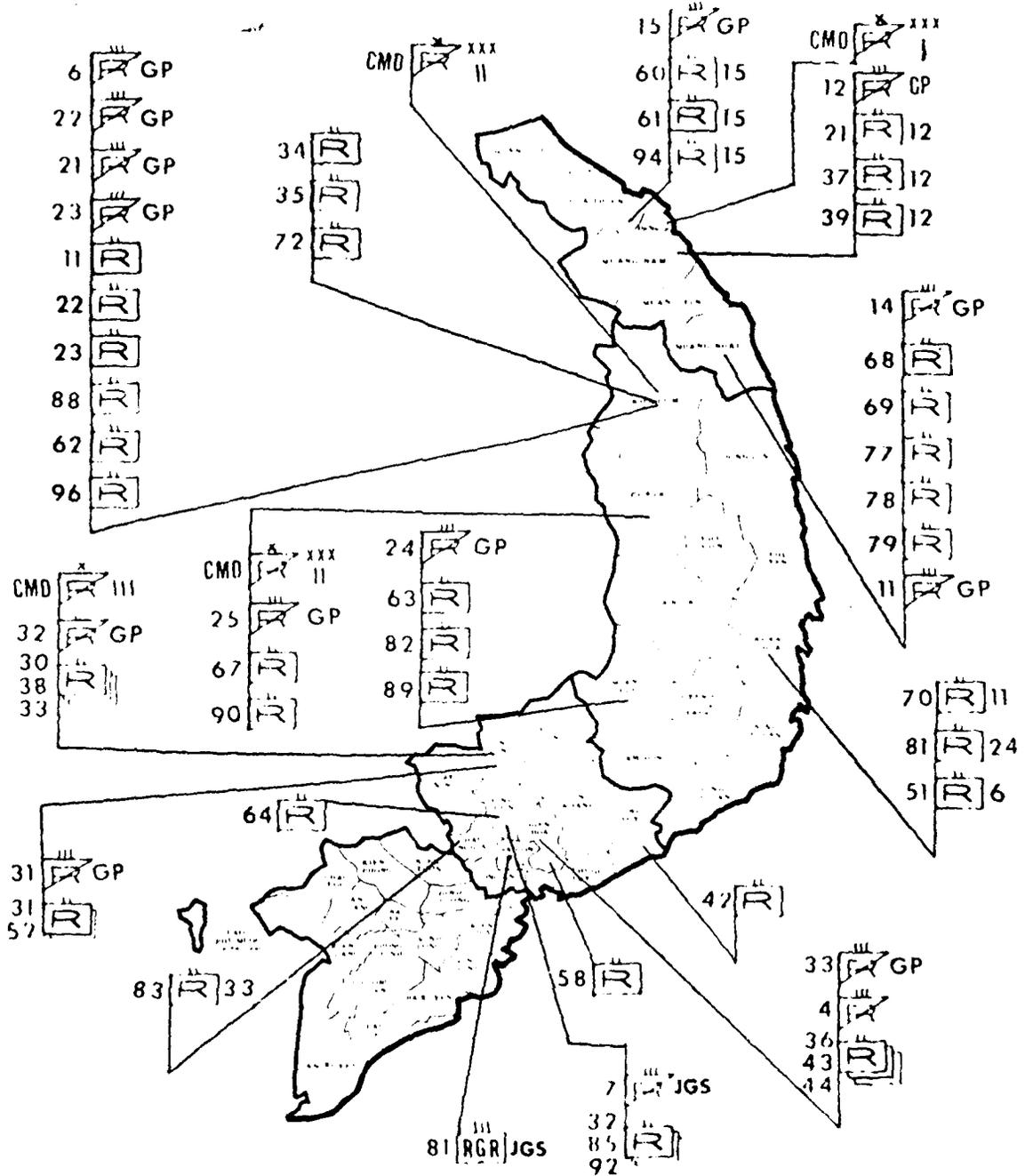


Figure 5-7

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(e) On 30 March, the city was lost and some 4,000 marines were evacuated by sea.

(2) On 1 January, the 1st Abn was in Corps reserve near Da Nang and the 3rd Bde was in defensive positions southwest of Da Nang. The 2nd Bde, under the Operational Control (OpCon) of the 1st Division, had been withdrawn from positions northwest of Hue and was preparing to enter training at Dong Da, southeast of Hue. On 23 January, 1,300 troops were assigned to the newly-formed 4th Abn Bde, with HQ at Marble Mountain. The 4th Bde was deployed to Saigon on 6 February to continue training and organization. The 1st, 2nd, 3rd Bdes were engaged only in sporadic contact during January and February.

(a) In mid-March, President Thieu ordered the Abn Div to deploy to Saigon. The HQ plus the 1st and 2nd Bdes completed the deployment to Saigon within two weeks. The 3rd Bde, however, was diverted to Cam Ranh Bay on 19 March. By 21 March, the brigade was deployed on defensive positions along National Route (QL)-21 in northwestern Khanh Hoa Province. During late March, the Bde withdrew under very heavy pressure southeast to QL-1 north of Nha Trang, where it resisted the NVA advance until 1 April. Following the evacuation of Nha Trang, approximately 1,000 paratroopers were moved by sea to Vung Tau and later deployed to Saigon, where they regrouped and were placed in reserve.

(b) The 2nd Abn Bde was dispatched in early April to Phan Rang Air Base (AB). When it was replaced by elements of the 2nd Div and ranger elements, it returned to Bien Hoa and eventually saw action during late April in southern Bien Hoa Province.

(c) The 1st Abn Bde deployed to Xuan Loc to reinforce the 18th Div after the outbreak of major fighting there on 9 April. After the withdrawal from Xuan Loc on 20 April, the battered 1st Bde deployed south along Route 2 near Ba Ria to help remnants of the 3rd Div defend against NVA advances from Xuan Loc. Ba Ria fell on 27 April and the Brigade withdrew to Vung Tau where it remained until the surrender.

(d) The newly-formed 4th Bde was deployed in the Hoc Mon area northwest of Saigon. It never was involved in any significant action. Elements were dispatched to the Newport area on 28 April to clear sappers.

(3) The 1st Div remained committed in Thua Thien Province during the period. The division saw continued heavy combat through mid-January when it resecured control of most of the high ground south and southeast of Hue.

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(a) Assigned units were its 1st, 3rd and 51st Regiments (Regts), the 15th Rgr Group (Gp) and the 914th Regional Force Mobile Group (RF MG). The 2nd Abn Bde was under the operational control of the 1st Div and based in Phu Loc District, charged with keeping QL-1 open to Da Nang.

(b) Intense combat since late August 1974 on the high ground overlooking QL-1 south and southeast of Hue had taken a heavy toll of the 1st Div. The replacement system could not keep up with requirements. As a result, the division's effectiveness had appreciably declined by early 1975.

(c) The division saw only limited activity from mid-January to mid-March. On 21 March, elements of the 1st and 51st Regts were overrun on the ridgeline southeast of Hue and contact was lost. QL-1 was cut the following day, but the 1st Div and ranger forces continued to defend west of the cut, providing security for the withdrawal of marine units. On 24 March, the decision to abandon Hue was made and the 1st Div was to provide security along QL-1 for the evacuation. The evacuation quickly became a rout, and the 1st Div was lost as an identifiable unit. Its decimation was so complete that no real efforts were made to reconstitute the division.

(4) The 3rd Div AO was expanded southward from Quang Nam Province. The division's 2nd, 56th and 57th Regts operated southwest of Da Nang, primarily in Dai Loc and Que Son Districts, Quang Nam Province.

(a) The 3rd Div saw substantial activity during February in central Quang Nam, suffering significant casualties. Division strength figures by early March were estimated at between 70 to 80 percent of its Table of Organization and Equipment (TOE).

(b) President Thieu's order for the withdrawal of the Abn Div from defense of Da Nang in MR 1 set in motion a sequence of events that led to the virtual destruction of the 3rd Div. After the fall of Hue on 24 March, efforts to establish a viable defense line for Da Nang failed. The city fell by 30 March with the 3rd Div being reduced to hundreds of individuals mingling among the panicked populace. Remnants of the division were evacuated by sea and eventually regrouped at Ba Ria. Units representing the 2nd and 56th Regts were involved in combat at Ba Ria, which fell on 27 April. What remained of the 3rd Div was deployed to defensive positions on the approach to Vung Tau.

(5) The 2nd Div conducted operations in its normal AO in Quang Ngai Province during January and February. During February, spoiling operations by 2nd Div elements, supported by a ranger group

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in Nghia Hanh and western Mo Duc Districts, held communist forces in place, preventing their intended redeployment into Binh Dinh Province. These operations resulted in heavy casualties on both sides. In mid-March, the division's 4th and 5th Regts were sent to Quang Tin Province to bolster the defense of Tam Ky. The defense of Quang Ngai Province was left to the remaining 6th Regt, supported by rangers and Territorial Forces (TF). The effectiveness of the division's supporting forces was diminished as the NVA threat increased, resulting in the ranger and TF withdrawal from Son Ha and Tra Bong Districts and the diversion of ranger elements to reinforce other ARVN units to the north.

(a) On 23 March, the HQ and 1st Bn of the 6th Regt moved to Chu Lai. Following the fall of Quang Ngai City and Mo Duc and Duc Tho Districts on 24 March, the remainder of the 6th Regt, along with elements of the 11th Rgr Gp, attempted to withdraw through communist controlled Binh Son District toward Chu Lai. By the end of March, the 2nd Div HQ, remnants of its 4th and 6th Regts and support elements, along with approximately 4,000 civilians, were evacuated by sea to Cu Lao Re Island. They were subsequently moved to Cam Ranh Bay. The 5th Regt withdrew from Quang Tin Province to Quang Nam and was lost during the last days of the fighting.

(b) The remaining elements of the 2d Div were moved in early April from Cam Ranh Bay to Ham Tan in Binh Tuy Province where the division, minus its 5th Regt, was reformed. The division was instrumental in reestablishing order in the Ham Tan area. Following the reopening of Phan Rang AB, the 2nd Div moved to replace the 2nd Abn Bde in the defense of the base. These forces were lost in NVA attacks between 14 and 16 April, resulting in the fall of Ninh Thuan Province.

(6) The 22nd Div, exploiting its successes during the last quarter of 1974, reentered the An Lao Valley of northern Binh Dinh Province during January. In expectation of possible deployment of all or part of the division to the central highlands, the 22nd Div pulled out of An Lao in late January and intensified unit refresher training during February, rotating its four regiments through the Division Training Center (DTC) at An Son. Late in the month, however, increasing indications of an impending offensive, directed primarily against QL-19 and An Khe Pass, necessitated the deployment of the Division before complete rebuilding could be achieved.

(a) Prior to NVA attacks on 4 March, the 47th Regt was sent to the An Khe Pass area and began operations up the Vinh Thanh Valley, disrupting communist attack preparations somewhat. Meanwhile, the 40th and 41st Regts were in Hoai Nhon and the 42nd Regt was in Phu My. These units were charged with security of QL-1 and the heavily-populated coastal districts against possible renewed attacks in these areas.

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(b) After 4 March, elements of the 41st and 42nd Regts were moved into Binh Khe District and the An Khe Pass to reinforce the badly battered 47th Regt, which bore the brunt of initial NVA attacks. At mid-month, the 47th Regt was only marginally combat effective and was pulled out of the pass and sent to Hoai Nhon to rest and attempt to secure the northern districts. At the same time, the HQ and two battalions of the 40th Regt were diverted by MR 2 HQ to Khanh Hoa Province to reinforce the effort to reopen QL-21 in Khanh Duong District. These elements were routed by NVA attacks on the district town on 22 March. Remnants of the two battalions were later regrouped west of Nha Trang, but they had ceased to be effective units. Meanwhile in Binh Dinh, the 41st and 42nd Regts continued to hold in Binh Khe District until 26 March, when attempted NVA envelopments forced their gradual withdrawal toward the division base at An Son and Qui Nhon. The 47th Regt was caught up in the withdrawal from the northern districts, moved to Phu My on 28 March, and probably was lost during NVA attacks on Phu Cat AB on 31 March. The 41st and 42nd Regts fell back to enclaves in Qui Nhon and were among the 7,000 troops evacuated with the Division Headquarters by the Vietnamese Navy (VNN) on 1 and 2 April.

(c) Remnants of the Division were evacuated to Vung Tau and rebuilding began at Long Hai during early April. With the growing threat in MR 3, the 22nd Div was hastily rebuilt into seven numerically-strong battalions. By 18 April, the Division Headquarters and the 41st and 42nd Regts had moved to the Ben Luc and Tan An areas, Long An Province. The regenerated 40th and 47th Regts moved to Rach Kien on 23 and 27 April respectively. Elements of the Division continued to offer resistance through 30 April.

(d) Throughout the desperate days of March and April, the 22nd Div fought gallantly and skillfully. Out-gunned and out-manned, it gave ground grudgingly. Of all the divisions in RVNAF, it probably gave the best account of itself. It certainly gave all it had.

(7) The 23rd Div AO consisted of the highland provinces of Pleiku, Darlac and Quang Duc. During January, elements of the 44th and 45th Regts, supported by rangers, conducted spoiling operations in Thanh An District, Pleiku Province, designed to weaken newly-reinforced NVA units. The 53rd Regt deployed from Pleiku to Quang Duc during January to counter anticipated attacks following the communist takeover of neighboring Phuoc Long Province in MR 3. The 53rd Regt HQ and its 1st and 3rd Bns later moved to Darlac and conducted operations in the Quang Nhieu area north of Ban Me Thuot. When communist diversionary attacks began on 28 February, 45th Regt elements held west of Pleiku City. Attacks in the Pleiku/Darlac/Phu Bon border area were ineffectively countered by the 44th Regt during early March, while the 2nd Bn/53rd Regt

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was lost when Duc Lap District Town was overrun on 10 March. When Ban Me Thuot was attacked on 10 March, MR 2 HQ initially reinforced with the 53rd Regt HQ and two battalions, along with rangers and TF's. Following the loss of the city on 12 March, a RVNAF counter-attack was launched on 15 March, with reinforcements consisting of 23rd Div HQ, the 45th Regt and one battalion of the 44th Regt. The counterattack failed, and, from 18 to 22 March, the defeated 23rd Division fell back through eastern Darlac Province to Khanh Hoa. The Division Headquarters and remnants of the 44th and 45th Regts eventually reached Nha Trang, but failed to reorganize effectively. The 53rd Regt held Ban Me Thuot East airfield until possibly 20 March, then withdrew southward, but was never located. The 3rd Bn, 53rd Regt, turned in one of the most gallant and determined defenses of the war in this battle. Meanwhile, the HQ and two battalions of the 44th Regt joined the evacuation of Pleiku. Those elements apparently were turned back by communist attacks at Cheo Reo in Phu Bon Province as they were never heard from again.

(8) The principal AO of the 25th Div was Tay Ninh and northern Hau Nghia Provinces. Two regiments of the division usually were deployed near Tay Ninh City with the other regiment strung along QL-1 from Go Dau Ha to Cu Chi.

(a) In January and February, the Division supported unsuccessful attempts to regain control of Nui Ba Den. Territorial forces assumed static defensive positions and units of the 25th Div attempted to dislodge communist forces from staging areas north and northwest of the city, but without any real success.

(b) In early March, communist forces struck hard in southern Tay Ninh Province and almost immediately secured control of all terrain west of the Vam Co Dong River, which had been defended by capable territorial units. The Division continued to keep major elements deployed north of Tay Ninh City, while one regiment attempted to secure QL-22. The 3rd Armor Bde and other ranger and ARVN units were sent into southern Tay Ninh to assist and assumed responsibility for most of southern Tay Ninh. QL-22 remained intermittently interdicted. NVA forces moved south into Long An Province in April, but the 25th Div remained in its AO.

(c) Despite constant rumors that the Division would abandon Tay Ninh City, the Division Commander kept a force in the city and along QL-22 and deployed one regiment from Go Dau Ha to Trang Bang and another from Trang Bang to Cu Chi. The Division prepared for expected attacks by the 316th NVA Div on Cu Chi. Attacks commenced on 29 April and the base camp fell later in the day.

(9) The 5th Div was only lightly committed in its AO during this reporting period. One battalion of the 7th Regt, committed to

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Phuoc Long Province in late December, was decimated when the NVA overran the province in early January. Normally, one regiment was deployed in the Phu Giao area in eastern Binh Duong Province, one regiment near Lai Khe and another on Route 7 in the Iron Triangle.

(a) In late February, the Division commenced operations north of Lai Khe. The initial operations were designed to locate the 9th NVA Div and, if only light pressure were met, to move north on QL-13 and link up with ranger forces at Chon Thanh. This mission was never accomplished, but division forces did support the successful evacuation of ranger and territorial forces from Binh Long Province.

(b) In mid-March, the 7th Regt was temporarily placed under the operational control of the 3rd Armor Bde and deployed in Khiem Hanh District, Tay Ninh Province. One battalion was ambushed and nearly destroyed.

(c) Activity was very light during the last two weeks of April. One regiment was sent to Long Khanh Province to assist in attempts to open QL-1. Strong communist attacks resulted in the decimation of this unit. Most of the Division was still in the Lai Khe/Ben Cat area when the NVA entered Saigon on 30 April.

(10) The 18th Div remained the most effective ARVN unit in MR 3. It was heavily committed in eastern MR 3 throughout most of the period.

(a) In January, the division concentrated on regaining lost territory in Binh Tuy Province. By mid-January, the 43rd Regt had secured Hoai Duc District Town, and the following week, the 52nd Regt completed the operation to open Interprovincial Route (LTL) 333 from QL-1 to Hoai Duc.

(b) During February, the Division attempted to regroup after two months of steady fighting and also attempted several preemptive operations along QL-1 east of Xuan Loc, after intelligence reports indicated a major NVA build-up. In early March, the 43rd Regt was temporarily deployed in southern Tay Ninh, but returned to eastern MR 3 after major NVA attacks began along QL-1 and QL-20 in mid-March. The communists succeeded in interdicting QL-20 near Dinh Quan and QL-1 east of Xuan Loc. On 9 April, NVA forces from four divisions commenced an attack against the 18th Div near Xuan Loc. This was the first major test of ARVN after the collapse in the northern provinces. The 18th Div forces, reinforced with the 1st Abn Bde, fought extremely well in Xuan Loc, but the 52nd Regt and 3rd Armor Bde were unable to open QL-1 east of Xuan Loc.

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Realizing that continued defense of Xuan Loc was useless, the 18th Div and Abn units successfully evacuated Xuan Loc. The Division was given two days' rest and then sent to forward positions in the Trang Bom area east of Bien Hoa and Long Binh. The Division conducted delaying actions against the NVA advancing westward and was probably located on the outskirts of Bien Hoa when it surrendered.

(11) The 7th Div operated effectively throughout the period and remained the main bulwark against communist units in and around Dinh Tuong Province. It continued to suffer from serious manpower shortages, with the average combat strength of battalions at less than 300 soldiers.

(a) To improve the combat capability of the three ARVN divisions in MR 4, the Corps HQ authorized the assignment of a Regional Force (RF) battalion to each regiment, plus the formation of another infantry regiment. By mid-March, the battalions had been integrated into the regiments, and, around 20 April, the new 61st Regt, formerly an RF group from Go Cong Province, was deployed along QL-4 and near the Division's base camp at Dong Tam. The integration of TF units into ARVN afforded better control over these battalions and also released other battalions from static security missions, allowing for greater mobility in actions against the communists.

(b) The Division's 10th and 12th Regts engaged in numerous skirmishes with the 8th NVA Div in Dinh Tuong Province. When elements of the 5th NVA Div attacked along the Dinh Tuong/Long An Province border, the 12th Regt deployed there and scored several victories, forcing the NVA to pull back temporarily. The deployment of the 12th Regt to Long An severely strained the 10th Regt's ability to keep QL-4 open. However, during the GVN's last week, the 12th Regt returned to central Dinh Tuong. The 11th Regt spent much of the quarter under the operational control of the MR 4 Task Force and saw frequent action in central MR 4.

(12) The majority of the 9th Div remained pitted against the 5th NVA Div in Kien Tuong Province. Meanwhile, the Division's 16th Regt was under the operational control of the 21st Div. This regiment spent the first part of the year in northern Kien Giang Province, but, in April, was deployed to Vinh Long Province after elements of three communist regiments moved there. The 16th Regt and TF were able to keep QL-4 open through the province. The 14th Regt was generally deployed in the Moc Hoa area and the 15th Regt in southern and eastern Kien Tuong. These units, which used artillery to good effect, generally were able to contain 5th NVA Div attacks in the province, but, unlike 1974, the Division lacked the capability to force the 5th NVA Div back into Cambodia. The combat strength of battalions in the division was among the lowest of the ARVN divisions. When the NVA commenced

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attacks in Long An, the 9th Div moved eastward through Kien Tuong and successfully struck 5th NVA Div rear supply lines. In the last two weeks, the Division, reinforced with the 6th Rgr Gp, absorbed eastern Dinh Tuong into its AO.

(13) The 21st Div continued to be the least combat effective in MR 4. However, under the command of Colonel Mach Van Truong, it showed definite signs of improvement. It remained plagued by generally poor leadership, too expansive an AO and very weak supporting TF. Several times during the period, the Division scored impressive victories, particularly against the 4th NVA Div in Chuong Thien Province and against an NVA/VC battalion-sized unit with transportation elements north of Rach Gia in mid-March.

(a) In March, the 4th NVA Div moved toward Can Tho and most of the 21st Div was deployed to defend the city. The Division, supported by the 11th Regt/7th Div, and with good artillery and air support, was able to blunt NVA probes towards Can Tho and, in early April, the communists temporarily pulled away.

(b) Subsequent light probes by the NVA/VC in April were successfully countered by the Division. Elements of one regiment spent much of the period deployed along infiltration corridor 1-C in northern Kien Giang Province.

(14) Ranger Command.

(a) Ranger forces in MR 1 saw considerable combat throughout the period and suffered substantial casualties. The 15th Rgr Gp was under the operational control of the 1st Abn Div, with an assigned AO in the hill complex south of Phu Bai. The 15th made only sporadic contact with NVA forces from mid-January to mid-March. It was then lost as an identifiable unit, along with the 1st Div, while helping provide security for the marine withdrawal from northern MR 1 in late March. The 11th, 12th and 14th Rgr Gps, operating in Quang Ngai and Quang Tin Provinces, were under the operational control of the 2nd Div and experienced intensive fighting for much of the period. The 11th Rgr Gp was the exception, with two of its battalions, the 68th and 69th, occupying defensive positions at Son Ha and Tra Bong, respectively, for most of the period. The 70th Bn, which had been lost at Gia Vuc in September 1974, was reconstituted during the period, but some 165 men deserted the unit by the time it had deployed in Binh Son District, Quang Ngai Province. The 79th Bn/14th Rgr Gp was sent in to reinforce the 70th Bn due to the latter's unreliability. The 68th and 69th Bns were withdrawn from Tra Bong and Son Ha in mid-March and attempted unsuccessfully to secure QL-1 between Son Tinh and Quang Ngai City until its fall on 24 March. In east central Quang Ngai,

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the 12th and 14th Gps, under the operational control of the 2nd Div, saw continued heavy combat. Preemptive operations in that area during February, held communist forces in place, preventing their intended deployment to Binh Dinh Province. The 12th took substantial casualties during this period south of Nghia Hanh and was replaced by the 14th Rgr Gp. Elements of the 12th moved to Tam Ky, in Quang Tin Province, in early March, where they received heavy casualties during attacks on 15 March. By 24 March, Tam Ky had fallen and the ranger forces were dispersed. Meanwhile, the 14th Rgr Gp had moved north to help cover the marine withdrawal from the Hue area. The 14th was also destroyed. As a result of the collapse of RVNAF in MR 1 in March, all ranger forces in the region were lost as identifiable units.

(b) In MR 2 during the first two months of the period, ranger units established defensive positions in the Chu Pao Pass along QL-14 south of Kontum City and southwest of Pleiku City. Three ranger groups, the 22nd, 23rd and 6th, were deployed in a perimeter northeast to northwest of Kontum City and conducted patrols in force north of their positions. These patrols prevented concentrated attacks by the existing communist forces in the area, and only sporadic activity was reported. The 21st Rgr Gp was deployed southwest of Pleiku City in the vicinity of Thanh An District Town and at Plei Me outpost. Patrols and security operations were successful in keeping the NVA off balance in that area of operations. The 24th Rgr Gp continued to occupy Kien Duc District in Quang Duc Province and the provincial town of Gia Nghia. In early March, when the NVA put pressure on QL-19 in eastern Pleiku, the 4th Rgr Gp was released from the JGS reserve in Saigon and returned to Pleiku Province. The group was deployed at Fire Support Base (FSB) 93 and FSB 94 east of Pleiku City on QL-19. Heavy fighting occurred in this area after 4 March, resulting in the overrunning of FSB 94 and the interdiction of QL-19 by the communists. The 4th Rgr Gp was successful in blunting advances in the area, but was unsuccessful in reopening QL-19. In mid-March, the 7th Rgr Gp was released from the JGS reserve and moved from Saigon to Pleiku Province to bolster the defense of Thanh An District Town. The 21st Rgr Gp was deployed from the Chu Pao Pass, Kontum Province, to reinforce RVNAF forces in the defense of Ban Me Thuot on 11 March. After heavy fighting, remnants of the 21st Rgr Gp were forced to withdraw eastward to Khanh Hoa Province, along with ARVN units, and were sent to the ranger training center at Duc My. With the evacuation of Kontum and Pleiku Provinces, the ranger groups (22nd, 23rd, 25th, 4th, 6th, and 7th) joined the remaining two battalions of the 23rd Div in the withdrawal to Tuy Hoa, Phu Yen Province. Ranger units were responsible for security of the convoy along LTL-7B; however, discipline and order among the rangers broke

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down during the evacuation. The rangers reportedly were responsible for numerous atrocities against the civilian population of Cheo Reo. By 19-20 March, communist attacks on the convoy had cut off elements of the 22nd, 23rd and 25th Gps at Cheo Reo. The last remnants of the ranger groups were extracted from LTL-7B in the Ba River area in Phu Bon and Phu Yen Provinces. One composite group was formed for the defense of Tuy Hoa, while one battalion of the 7th Gp moved to the Ca Pass on QL-1, south of Tuy Hoa. The remainder were sent to Duc My Training Center, but were never effectively reformed. The 24th Rgr Gp continued to defend Gia Nghia and Kien Duc District Towns in Quang Duc Province. The 81st and 82nd Bns in Kien Duc performed well and repulsed NVA attacks against the town and adjacent Nhon Co Airfield. In late March, the entire group withdrew from its positions to Lam Dong Province and later moved to Khanh Hoa Province. MR 2 Ranger HQ was first established under BG Pham Duy Tat at Tuy Hoa. By the end of March, the Ranger Command moved to Nha Trang. With the evacuation of Nha Trang on 1 April, the Ranger Command effectively ceased to exist.

(c) During January and February, two ranger groups in MR 3 continued to defend the isolated outposts of An Loc and Chon Thanh in Binh Long Province without major contacts. The 33rd Rgr Gp had its 83rd Bn permanently stationed at Duc Hue in Hau Nghia Province. The other two battalions were deployed to numerous locations in northern Bien Hoa and Binh Duong Provinces. These battalions often were combined with armor units from the 3rd Armor Bde to form mobile task forces. The 7th Rgr Gp, a JGS asset assigned to MR 3, was badly battered in Binh Thuy in late December/early January and spent the first part of the period regrouping and refitting. JGS also commenced organizing the 8th Rgr Gp which was deployed west of Saigon. Midway through the period, the 9th Rgr Gp was formed and deployed northwest of Saigon. In early March, the 7th Rgr Gp went to MR 2. Remnants of this group were later reorganized and deployed in Binh Chanh District, Gia Dinh Province. In mid-March, the GVN made the decision to evacuate Binh Long Province. The 32nd Rgr Gp and TF succeeded in evacuating An Loc without losses and joined the 31st Rgr Gp at Chon Thanh. These two groups then repelled numerous armor and infantry attacks by the 341st NVA Div at Chon Thanh. On 1 April, Chon Thanh was evacuated with about 20% casualties to the rangers. The 32nd Rgr Gp immediately joined elements of the 33rd Rgr Gp and other ARVN forces in southern Tay Ninh Province. Meanwhile, the 31st Rgr Gp was tasked to replace the 2nd Abn Bde at Phan Rang and arrived in time to be decimated during attacks there. Some ranger elements also were involved in the Xuan Loc battle. In the final weeks, newly-formed and reconstituted ranger units manned positions in the western portion of the CMD.

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b. Last/final information received as of 21 February 1975 on artillery and armor operational readiness is presented at paragraph 5c and d on page 5-30.

4. SUPPLY/LOGISTICS. The impact of fund suspension in Jan 74 and severe fund constraints during Fiscal Year 1975 continued to be felt.

a. The losses of the 2nd ARVN Associated Depot (AAD) at Da Nang, two Medium Maintenance Centers (MMC), five Direct Support Groups (DSG) and two Collection and Classification Point (C&CP) annexes drastically reduced the overall supply posture. Summary of ARVN equipment losses for all four Military Regions (MR) is shown below:

<u>TYPE MATERIEL</u>		<u>DOLLAR VALUE</u>
Major Items:		
MR 1 & MR 2		\$503,000,000
MR 3 & MR 4 (Est)		1,200,000,000
General Supplies:		
MR 1 & MR 2		110,500,000
MR 3 & MR 4		350,000,000
Medical Supplies:		15,500,000
Hospitals:	<u>NO</u>	<u>BEDS</u>
General	2	6,000
Station	12	8,800
Field	44	5,500
Naval & AF	2	300
TB	2	1,800
Convalescent Centers	6	3,600
Dispensaries & Clinics	264	<u>5,720</u>
Totals:	31,720	<u>20,000,000</u> \$2,199,000,000

b. Depot Operations.

(1) During this period, the level of activity at the 1st and 2nd AADs increased. The 2nd AAD at Da Nang began accelerated efforts to improve location accuracy and complete the identification and warehousing of the remnants of material remaining from consolidation of the Technical Service Field Depots in that area. In mid-February, issue activity increased as units in MR 1 began filling stock shortages.

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(2) With the increased tempo of combat in MR 1 Da Nang became the center towards which all evacuation by both ARVN and refugee columns moved. The JCS announced that Da Nang would be held at all costs; however, in reality, the combat power available to ARVN in that area was disorganized, stripped of much critical equipment, engulfed by an estimated one million refugees, and almost totally lacking in rear area control.

(3) Concerted efforts to evacuate materiel were initiated in early March 1975, with first priority given to major items of equipment located in the 2nd AAD. Under cover of darkness, weapons, self-propelled vehicles and armored vehicles were moved to the pier area for evacuation. It remained there through the loss of Da Nang. Retrograde was halted with the announced "defense to the death" order. Later efforts to evacuate equipment were futile because the refugee situation was completely out of control.

(4) The order to destroy materiel in the depot facilities in Da Nang was not given. Plans for destruction were available in each of the logistic facilities, but required the approval of the Military Region (MR) commander to execute. In the case of the 2nd AAD, the Depot Commander personally visited the 1st ALC Headquarters and Headquarters of MR 1 in attempts to gain approval to execute destruction plans. The depot was not destroyed even though the depot personnel were some of the last to leave and had to swim to a ship to be evacuated.

(5) The USDAO Technical Assistance Representative was withdrawn from the 2nd AAD in early April and arrived in Saigon safely.

(6) The 2nd AAD ceased activity as an ARVN depot facility with the communist takeover on 30 March 1975.

(7) The 1st AAD, Long Binh, likewise experienced increased levels of activity during this period. Active preparation was underway to conduct an inventory; increased numbers of tactical wheeled vehicles, combat vehicles, crew served weapons, and small arms were being received from the maintenance base; and sizeable quantities of weapons and equipment were being turned in as units and straggling columns of troops began to filter back to the Saigon area from the central highlands and Ban Me Thuot area.

(8) The mass exodus from the central highlands, and the fall of Da Nang caused a sudden flurry of activity throughout the Saigon area. Army Division, DAO, spearheaded an effort to accelerate increased production from the maintenance base; recovery and turn-in of materiel and equipment being returned; and an ambitious project to reconstitute and reequip those combat units returning from the abandoned areas of MR 1 and MR 2 which had enough unit integrity to allow reequipping and replacement of personnel

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shortages with filler personnel. This effort was accomplished by first using all available equipment in the 1st AAD and other logistical units, and filling other critical shoot, move, and communicate items with airlift from CONUS. The 1st AAD played a major role in this exercise, to include assistance in manning the aerial port operation, expedited receipt, servicing and issue of weapons, vehicles and artillery, and at the same time supporting teams of personnel positioned within the depot to locate critical items and repair parts needed by the maintenance activities and their normal customers.

(9) The depot performed admirably. Some 250 personnel evacuated from the 2nd AAD, Da Nang, arrived in Saigon and were immediately assigned to the 1st AAD to assist. The depot went to a 24-hour, 3-shift operation in early April and remained on that schedule until the end.

(10) The Logistics Team of the Army Supply Center and the depot performed so well that equipment and materiel were leading the availability of personnel in the force reconstitution effort. Over eight regimental-sized infantry units and four artillery battalions were equipped and deployed in defense of the Saigon area within a four-week period, a concrete testimonial to the logistic dedication of that team.

(11) Major items of equipment were dispersed from the depot to PSG and MMC for rapid issue to using units and to reduce vulnerability to enemy action.

(12) The logistic troops in Long Binh functioned until the very end, and, from accounts received, seemed to have staunchly defended their depot. Information was not available to determine whether the destruction plan for the 1st AAD was executed or whether it remained intact but extensive damage and destruction from communist initiated artillery, rocket and mortar barrages was reported in the final week.

(13) The US Department of Defense civilians and third country national contractor technical assistance personnel were withdrawn from the 1st AAD in mid-April; all safely repositioned in Saigon.

(14) The 1st AAD fell to communist control on 29 April 1975, and ceased to function as an ARVN logistic facility.

## c. Status of Ammunition (January through April 1975).

(1) Prior to the March offensive, all ground ammunition had been positioned to support and sustain a fighting force at any given location based on their current weapon density. Most key combat items were at 60 days of supply at the intensive combat rate.

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(2) Available beginning of period:

Short tons	131,084
Dollars	308,965,374

(3) Expenditure during period (thru 9 Apr 75):

Short tons	81,960
Dollars	165,577,474

(4) On hand at end of period (as of 26 Apr 75):

Short tons	34,163
Dollars	101,600,762

(5) Requisitions:

Short tons	34,581
Dollars	70,632,675

(6) Stockage Objective (SO):

Short tons	134,830
Dollars	340,175,957

d. Shortfall.

(1) Logistics/Management: The Army Supply Center (ASC) high level of operational effort continued despite losses. Stringent fund constraints coupled with losses caused the shortfall in providing the necessary supplies for operational purposes. Medical facilities remained crowded and supplies were short.

(2) During the NVA offensive, considerable ground ammunition was lost. Depot losses through 29 April 1975 totalled 95,104 short tons (ST) worth approximately \$246,016,553. No efforts by ground troops to destroy depots before withdrawal were reported. VNAF flew several bombing sorties against some of the depots but photo reconnaissance coverage indicated that destruction was only minimal. There was only one known attempt made at evacuation of ammunition. A total of 1,300 ST were removed from Depot 521 at Qui Nhon and safely repositioned. Based on the above, it must be assumed that the large majority of the ammunition was captured intact by the communists. A complete listing of tonnage and dollar value lost, by depot, follows:

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## REPORTED DEPOT LOSSES ARVN GROUND AMMUNITION

DEPOT NUMBER	LOCATION	DATE RPTD LOST	ST RPTD LOST	\$VALUE RPTD LOST
552	Ban Me Thuot	10 Mar 75	4,403	\$ 9,304,228
522	Pleiku	16 Mar 75	11,597	22,840,772
524	Kontum	16 Mar 75	1,855	4,361,265
515	Hoa My	23 Mar 75	895	1,176,064
512	Phu Bai	23 Mar 75	11,157	23,965,785
513	Chu Lai	26 Mar 75	5,308	*14,156,436
511	Da Nang	28 Mar 75	12,622	*33,662,874
521	Qui Nhon	31 Mar 75	4,410	*11,761,470
525	Tuy Hoa	02 Apr 75	937	* 2,498,979
551	Dong Ba Thin	02 Apr 75	5,133	*13,689,711
554	Phan Thiet	02 Apr 75	1,047	* 2,792,349
555	Da Lat	02 Apr 75	1,577	* 4,205,859
536	Tay Ninh	Not Reported	1,172	** 3,485,528
531	Long Binh	29 Apr 75	8,412	**25,017,288
534	Long Binh	29 Apr 75	10,805	**32,134,070
533	Tanh Tuy Ha	29 Apr 75	7,200	**21,412,800
542	Can Tho	29 Apr 75	3,458	**10,284,092
543	My Tho	29 Apr 75	1,317	** 3,916,758
545	Sa Dec	29 Apr 75	400	** 1,189,600
-	Go Vap	29 Apr 75	1,399	** 4,160,625
	(Opened 21Apr75)			
Total:			95,104	\$246,016,553

\* Actual dollar losses not available. Figures computed based on 24 Mar 75 balance on hand cost-per-ton of \$2,667.

\*\* Same as (\*) except cost computed on 9 Apr 75 balance on hand cost-per-ton of \$2,974.

### 5. MAINTENANCE.

a. General. The maintenance data reflected herein represents the baseline data prior to the NVA offensive.

(1) The massive offensive launched by the North Vietnamese Army in March 1975 tremendously affected ARVN maintenance activities in the Area Logistics Commands (ALC's). Many of the maintenance units located in these ALC's were wholly or partially destroyed in the North Vietnamese onslaught, with extensive losses in personnel, equipment, and materiel.

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(2) Shortages of repair parts began to have serious effects at all echelons of maintenance. Visits to maintenance activities indicated that work was gradually coming to a complete standstill on repairs requiring repair parts. All supply sources were being screened to obtain parts directly or through transfer between supply activities, and emphasis was placed on ensuring maximum recovery of parts from cannibalization points. Without improved availability of parts, the deadline rate for all items began to increase significantly.

b. Field maintenance.

(1) End use surveillance inspections were changed to visits, which were performed to review specific equipment categories or shop functions as follows:

January 1975	Transportation equipment
February 1975	Artillery
March 1975	Support shops

For the three-month period, approximately 30 end use surveillance visits were conducted. During April 1975, visits were limited to the Saigon area.

(2) During the period, the Operational Readiness (OR) rate for equipment continued to remain at an acceptable level as indicated below:

\*OPERATIONAL READINESS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>2ND QTR FY75</u>	<u>3RD QTR FY75</u>
Materiel Handling Equipment (MHE)	74%	75%
Tactical wheeled vehicles	81%	87%
Combat vehicles	91%	91%
Artillery	94%	97%
Communications-Electronics (C-E)	95%	95%

\*Figures for 3rd Qtr are as of 21 Feb 75. Due to hostile action and absence of, or inaccuracies in reporting, no reliable data could be collected for the remaining period.

(3) ARVN Commanders continued to show interest in improving readiness and reducing maintenance costs. This interest was particularly evident at the highest command echelons, where seminars were held to discuss state of readiness, trends and solutions to conditions impeding improvements.

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c. Artillery. The overall operational readiness rate decreased slightly but remained well above the ARVN standard of 83%. The OR rates for the period were as follows:

	<u>105mm</u>	<u>155mm</u>	<u>175mm</u>
2nd Qtr/75	95%	92%	93%
*3rd Qtr/75	95%	92%	88%

(Figures 5-8A, 5-8B, 5-8D, 5-8E and 5-8F)

\*Figures for 3rd Qtr are as of 21 Feb 75.

d. Armor. The overall OR rate for armor decreased slightly but remained well above the DA standard of 83%. Repair of defective computers and electrical fire control systems improved, with the Vietnamese Army Arsenal repairing computers to a limited degree. Contractor personnel continued to conduct on-the-job training to raise the skill level of ARVN technicians involved in trouble shooting and repair of fire control systems. The OR rates for the period were as follows:

	<u>M113</u>	<u>M41A3</u>	<u>M48A3</u>
2nd Qtr/75	90%	92%	90%
*3rd Qtr/75	89%	91%	93%

(Figure 5-9)

\*Figures for 3rd Qtr are as of 21 Feb 75.

Data as of 21 Feb 75 are used to establish a baseline for readiness at the last reporting period to the NVA offensive. Due to hostilities and the absence of, or inaccuracies in reporting, no reliable data could be collected for the remaining period.

e. MHE. The OR rate remained at 74%. Continued command emphasis and effort by contractor personnel to raise the skill level of technicians and the quality of maintenance would have resulted in further improvement in the OR rate for MHE.

f. Tactical wheeled vehicles.

(1) The OR rate increased to 87%. Lack of batteries and tires, which were available in the supply system but not properly distributed, continued to be the primary reason for deadlined vehicles. ARVN was attempting to correct this condition.

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(2) The number of high mileage vehicles in use continued to increase. It became more difficult to recycle all of these vehicles through depot maintenance because of lack of funds for purchase of repair parts and lack of capacity to accommodate additional items.

### g. Depot maintenance.

(1) The level of self-sufficiency at the 40th Engineer Base Depot (EBD) rebuild facilities, particularly in the area of technical proficiency of personnel, continued to improve. However, deficiencies in ability to prepare realistic bill of materiel requirements and basic managerial skills were still apparent. A concerted effort was being made to rectify these conditions.

(2) Due to the limited availability of diagnostic and test equipment at the 40th EBD, the Inspect and Repair as Needed (IRAN) program could not be fully implemented. In addition, equipment required to restore unserviceable track groups (track shoes, rollers, carriers, and idlers) for crawler tractors was lacking. Therefore:

(a) Costly repairs were made in overhauling components, when possibly only minor or no repair was required.

(b) Unserviceable track groups were being replaced with new ones, when they could have been restored to a serviceable condition at considerable savings.

(3) To help rectify the above conditions and reduce costs in obtaining required allied trades equipment, a survey was conducted to determine those items which could be fabricated or which were in-country but unidentified. Some equipment (valued at \$60,000) required to upgrade the rebuild facilities was located at Long Binh, and arrangements were made to obtain its release.

(4) The FY75 Rebuild Program production on end items slipped by 43% during the quarter. The principal cause for slippage was lack of repair parts.

(5) All unserviceable assets (major end items) on hand were inventoried. In addition, those items that could not be economically rebuilt and those no longer eligible for rebuild were reported to the Army Supply Center (ASC) for disposition instructions.

(6) Unserviceable major components on hand were being inventoried.

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## h. Vietnamese Army Arsenal (VAA).

(1) FY75 Rebuild Program production continued to fall short of production goals. Lack of parts was the principal cause.

(2) At the end of March 1975, the following actions were taken by DAO and the ARVN Office of Chief of Ordnance (OCO) to assist in equipping the reconstituted units and to increase production to support combat operations:

(a) An intensive maintenance program was initiated to include the identification, collection and classification of unserviceable assets for repair and return to stock. Daily production outputs were provided as management data.

(b) Special repair parts expediting teams were established to obtain critical parts from storage depots.

(c) Rebuild depots implemented a seven-day workweek with two shift operations. Engine testing started two shifts on 24 March 1975.

(d) The VAA hired an additional 200 wounded ex-soldiers to assist in any work they could do.

(e) Additional DAO US civilian, local national and contractor personnel were assigned to the depots to assist in resolving production problems and expedite repair parts to the shops.

(f) Advance disassembly of unserviceable assets was instituted to obtain useable parts.

(g) Critically required engines and repair parts were borrowed from contractor and Vietnamese Navy (VNN) sources.

(h) Intensive coordination was taken to expedite return of items being rebuilt at offshore rebuild facilities.

(i) Tire and road wheel rebuild materials were borrowed from Taiwan rebuild facilities.

(j) Appearance standards were reduced to conserve parts and expedite production.

(k) Unserviceable engines were exchanged for serviceable items from CONUS stocks in lieu of offshore rebuild.

(l) Through intensive management, the M113 Armored Personnel Carrier (APC) rebuild was increased from three to five vehicles per week.

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## (3) Maintenance facilities.

(a) Power train shop: The planned reorganization of production equipment continued to be delayed, primarily because of production demands.

## (b) Phase II upgrade and foundry installation:

1 Construction of the new combat vehicle and artillery buildings was still underway. The project would have been extended approximately three to four months due to late receipt of materials. During the period, ARVN engineers started work on their phase of the project.

2 Work on the foundry project was completed during the period with the installation of foundry production equipment, air compressors, transformers, and a new water well. The foundry was expected to be turned over to VAA in May 1975.

## 6. RECONSTITUTION OF ARVN FORCES.

### a. Planning.

(1) After withdrawal from the central highlands in MR 2 and subsequent loss of MR 1 and the major population centers in MR 2, large numbers of ARVN soldiers were returned by vessel to the ports at Cam Ranh Bay and Vung Tau, many as stragglers. Almost without exception, there was little unit integrity. Most personnel were returned as individuals and required identification, reequipping and organization/assignment into units.

(2) As late as 26 March 1975, no plan for reconstitution of forces had been developed by the RVNAF Joint General Staff (JGS). As a result, efforts to identify equipment requirements to support reconstitution for the defense of Saigon and other vital areas under RVN control were frustrated.

(3) The first ARVN plans for reconstitution were submitted to the Army Division by the Central Logistics Command (CLC) at DAO's insistence; however, they were geared completely to Congressional approval of supplemental funding. No concept for tactical employment was included, nor was it phased with the realistic return of evacuees from MR 1 and MR 2. While approved at the CLC level, no JGS input from the J1, J3 or J5 staffs had been provided and planning included only materiel requirements. A major planning fallacy was the timely reconstitution of forces to meet the NVA offensive threat to the Saigon area which was gaining momentum daily. Initial materiel requirements included were based on four projects as follows, only three of which related to the Army (ARVN) forces. The fourth was to replace aircraft losses.

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PROJECT 1: Reconstitution of combat units from the provinces of Kontum, Pleiku, Darlac, Quang Duc, Phu Bon, Thua Thien, Quang Tri, Quang Ngai, and Quang Tin. Cost -- \$220.2 million.

PROJECT 2: Modification of 27 regional force mobile groups (RF MG) into 27 separate infantry regiments. Cost -- \$69.6 million.

PROJECT 3: Modification of ranger groups into ranger divisions. Cost -- \$96.6 million.

TOTAL ARMY DOLLAR REQUIREMENTS -- \$386.4 million (less ammunition for basic loads).

(a) The short-range plan was to reequip the combat elements of three infantry divisions within three months. Long-range plans were to provide the additional equipment for the three infantry divisions, the replacement of major items of equipment since the cease-fire agreement as provided by the Paris Agreement. Detailed discussions with senior members of the Directorate of Plans, CLC, and the ASC clarified this plan as follows:

1 Short-range:

a Reequip three infantry divisions.

- Convert ranger groups (3) into one ranger division.
- Reconstitute the 23rd ARVN Inf Div
- Reconstitute the 1st ARVN Inf Div

b Time phasing.

- Complete by June 1975 (April - June).
- Equipment required by 15 May 1975.

2 Concurrent short-range actions:

a Begin in April 1975 to convert 27 RF MC into 27 separate infantry regiments. During the period April-May 1975, complete seven conversions in MR 4 and four in MR 3.

b Use maximum in-country resources to accomplish this action.

3 Long-range (July-September 1975).

a Reequip additional division units.

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- 2nd Infantry Division.
- Marine Division.
- Convert nine ranger groups to ranger divisions.

b Reconstitute combat support service and support units.

(b) Materiel priorities established for resource expenditure were as follows:

<u>PRIORITY</u>	<u>TYPE MATERIEL</u>
1	Weapons
2	Signal
3	Track vehicles
4	Wheeled vehicles
5	Engineer

(4) The Director of Plans, CLC, had not been able to obtain any planning information from the J3/J5 of the JGS and requested DAO assistance. Additional efforts were made by the Army Division on 29 March 1975 to obtain JGS participation in the planning process to include the forces to be reconstituted, staging areas where units were to be formed and reequipped, and plans for processing individual replacements. No such input was forthcoming from JGS and on 29 March 1975, the DATT was briefed on the situation. It was determined that DAO would assist in developing the plan. The J3, JGS was contacted by Operations and Plans Division to obtain assistance from RVNAF.

(5) Under the new guidance, DAO planning commenced on 29 March 1975. ARVN participation included representatives from the Directorate of Plans, CLC, the Deputy Commander of CLC, the ASC, and CTC. Throughout the entire period no J1, J3 or J5 representatives were present, although the CTC representative assumed an extremely active and important role, doing the J3's job, in effect. The plan:

(a) Provided for immediate reconstitution of forces using a building block concept of battalion sized units.

(b) Focused on combat and combat support type units.

(c) Attached reconstituted units to existing divisions to reduce the need for additional command and control, division logistics organizations, and a division signal organization; provided for increased fire support capability, division level artillery fire direction, command and control, and administrative overhead.

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- (d) Attached reconstituted units to units in MR 3 and 4.
  - (e) Provided filler personnel to existing divisions in the Saigon area to bring the divisions up to full strength.
  - (f) Reequipped units evacuated with organizational and tactical integrity to obtain combat capable units in the shortest possible time.
  - (g) Made maximum use of equipment retrograded from MR 1 and MR 2.
  - (h) Established priorities for equipping and deploying units to include equipment levels to be filled.
  - (i) Redistributed personnel and equipment as necessary from units with a less essential mission for the defense of the vital areas of RVN.
  - (j) Made maximum use of in-country assets through DSU/GSU maintenance, cannibalization, item substitution, priorities and in-country rebuild.
  - (k) Developed a realistic time phased plan for implementation.
  - (l) Considered in the planning process the availability of equipment based on prior year defined lines not yet called forward and available FY 75 funds.
  - (m) Developed organizational and equipment requirements based on receipt of supplemental FY 75 funding.
  - (n) Developed the concept and planning parameters. JGS/RVNAF were to complete the detailed schedules, unit priorities and implementing annexes.
- (6) The plan developed consisted of the following major phases:
- (a) PHASE I: Equip and staff 18 infantry battalions and 3 artillery batteries. Personnel were to be received by the CTC at collection centers, equipped with individual clothing and equipment, identified by MOS and ordered to divisions designated to receive additional units. Receiving divisions would complete training for newly-formed units and deployment made on order of the division commander.
  - (b) PHASE II: Organize additional division sized and regimental sized organizations from the units attached to the divisions when sufficient equipment became available to form the command structure, combat support and combat service support units. Four new infantry divisions would be formed.

UNCLASSIFIED

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(c) PHASE III: Reconstitute 12 ranger groups into four division sized organizations. Equipment requirements were based on the differential between existing equipment authorized the ranger groups and that required for the ranger divisions.

(d) PHASE IV: Reconstitute 27 Regional Forces (RF) mobile groups into 27 separate infantry regiments. Equipment requirements were based on the differential between equipment on hand in RF groups and that required for the separate infantry regiment. This action would integrate these RF units in MR 3 and MR 4 as ARVN regular forces.

(e) Concurrent Actions: Concurrent with these phases, any unit returning with sufficient organizational integrity to be reconstituted principally by equipping and filler personnel would receive priority action. Included in this category were two marine brigades, an airborne brigade, and a brigade of the 2nd Infantry Division, which were given priority by the ARVN. The activation/reconstitution schedule for this plan is shown below:

## PLANNED UNIT ACTIVATION/RECONSTITUTION SCHEDULE

### PHASE I

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>FORM</u>	<u>EQUIP</u>	<u>DEPLOY</u>
1st Bde, Marine Div	-	07 Apr 75	12 Apr 75
2nd Bde, Marine Div	-	14 Apr 75	19 Apr 75
3rd Bde, Abn Div	-	07 Apr 75	12 Apr 75
Six (6) Inf Bns	07 Apr 75	09 Apr 75	13 Apr 75
Six (6) Inf Bns	10 Apr 75	12 Apr 75	16 Apr 75
Six (6) Inf Bns	13 Apr 75	15 Apr 75	19 Apr 75
Three (3) D/S Arty Btrys	12 Apr 75	14 Apr 75	18 Apr 75

### PHASE II

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>ACTIVATION PERIOD</u>
Infantry Div	20 May - 20 Jun 75
Infantry Div	15 Jun - 15 Jul 75
Infantry Div	08 Jul - 08 Aug 75
Infantry Div	01 Aug - 31 Aug 75

### PHASE III

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>CONVERSION PERIOD</u>
Ranger Div	25 Jun - 25 Jul 75
Ranger Div	15 Jul - 15 Aug 75
Ranger Div	25 Jul - 25 Aug 75

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## PHASE III (CONT)

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>CONVERSION PERIOD</u>
Ranger Div	05 Aug - 05 Sep 75

## PHASE IV

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>CONVERSION PERIOD</u>
Convert 27 RF Groups to 27 Separate Inf Regiments	15 Apr - 30 Sep 75

(7) The DATT was briefed on the concept and provided a copy of the plan for discussion with LTG Khuyen. The plan was approved on 1 Apr 75 by RVNAF and an analysis of materiel requirements was immediately initiated by the Army Supply Center and DAO. The equipment list considered previously expedited delivery actions taken since 20 Mar 75 for defined lines and the total requirement for 18 infantry battalions and three artillery batteries. A planning message was dispatched outlining materiel requirements, a call forward submitted with program changes for the defined lines, and requisitions submitted for dollar lines. Air delivery was requested. Controls established to monitor receipt of materiel will be covered under the execution part of this summary.

(8) Concurrent with placing requirements on CONUS for materiel, the following additional actions/decisions were made by ARVN to equip returning personnel and units:

(a) Transfer of major items from the CTC and Division Training Centers to reconstituted units.

(b) Reduction of attrition/maintenance float assets at maintenance units and depots.

(c) Increase maintenance production using cannibalization as required to generate serviceable assets.

(d) Redistribution of materiel from lesser priority units.

(e) Establish priorities for issue and an allocation of assets to units based on a percentage of TOE authorizations.

(9) On 5 Apr 75, the RVNAF JGS published a reconstitution plan signed by GEN Cao Van Vien, Chief, RVNAF JGS. Although not identical or implemented exactly as the 1 Apr 75 plan, the general concept was similar. Major elements of this plan were:

(a) Priorities for reconstitution:

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## 1 Divisions --

- Marine Div and 3rd Bde, Abn Div
- 2nd Inf Div
- 3rd Inf Div
- 22nd Inf Div

## 2 Ranger Groups --

- 4th Ranger Group
- 6th Ranger Group
- 7th Ranger Group
- Ranger Groups from MR 1
- Ranger Groups from MR 2

## 3 Artillery --

- Artillery battalions, VNMC Division
- 2nd Artillery battalion, Airborne Division
- Artillery battalions, 2nd Infantry Division
- Artillery battalions, 3rd Infantry Division
- Artillery battalions, 22nd Infantry Division

## 4 Armor --

- 4th Cavalry/Armored Squadron, 2nd Infantry Division
- 11th Cavalry/Armored Squadron, 3rd Infantry Division
- 14th Cavalry/Armored Squadron, 22nd Infantry Division
- 20th Tank/Armored Squadron (M48)
- 21st Tank/Armored Squadron (M48)
- Armored squadrons/1st Cavalry Brigade
- Armored squadrons/2nd Cavalry Brigade

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## 5 Military Police (MP) --

- Division MP companies for VNMC Division, 2nd, 3rd and 22nd Divisions.
- 1st and 2nd MP Battalions

## 6 Signal, engineer and medical --

- Signal, engineer, medical battalions/VNMC Division
- Signal, engineer, medical battalions/2nd Infantry Division
- Signal, engineer, medical battalions/3rd Infantry Division
- Signal, engineer, medical battalions/22nd Infantry Div

7 Logistical and technical units -- First priority given to logistical and technical units VNMC Division, 3rd Airborne Brigade, and 2nd, 3rd, and 22nd Infantry Divisions.

### (b) Procedures and reorganization:

1 Organize combat battalions consisting of four rifle companies, a battalion headquarters, and a support company headquarters.

2 As equipment and personnel became available, organize into regiments.

3 Titles of regiments would not be changed.

4 Combat support and combat service support units would be formed under a similar building block process.

5 Regional force and popular force units from MR 1 and MR 2 would be dissolved and personnel assigned to the reconstituted divisions.

6 Dependent upon the availability of manpower and equipment, battalion level organizations would be reorganized in two weeks.

### (c) Locations for unit reconstitution:

1 VNMC Division -- Vung Tau

2 3rd Infantry Division -- Phuoc Tuy (Van Kiep Training Center)

3 2nd Infantry Division -- Binh Tuy

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4 22nd Infantry Division -- Long Hai

5 Ranger Groups -- Long Binh

6 3rd Airborne Brigade and 2nd Artillery Battalion, Airborne Division -- Hoang Hoa Tham Compound

7 Division artillery units -- At camp location related to divisions

8 Armored, signal, military police units -- At the Armored, Signal and Military Police schools

9 Division logistical and technical units -- At camp location of related divisions

(d) Responsibilities:

1 Divisions -- Assigned the responsibility for organizing division units with the assistance of the related technical branches.

2 Artillery, armored, MP and technical branches -- Responsible for organizing branch units, including related units of divisions.

3 Ranger Headquarters -- Responsible for reorganizing all ranger groups. Unit activation schedule is shown below:

## JGS PLANNED UNIT ACTIVATION SCHEDULE

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>ACTIVATION PERIOD</u>
6th Ranger Group	07 Apr - 12 Apr 75
7th Ranger Group	14 Apr - 19 Apr 75
4th Ranger Group	21 Apr - 26 Apr 75
marine brigade	07 Apr - 12 Apr 75
marine brigade	14 Apr - 19 Apr 75
marine brigade	21 Apr - 26 Apr 75
marine brigade	28 Apr - 03 May 75
4th Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division	
2 battalions	07 Apr - 12 Apr 75
1 battalions	14 Apr - 19 Apr 75
1 battalions	21 Apr - 26 Apr 75
5th Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division	
1 battalion	07 Apr - 12 Apr 75
1 battalion	14 Apr - 19 Apr 75
1 battalion	21 Apr - 26 Apr 75
1 battalion	28 Apr - 03 May 75

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## JCS PLANNED UNIT ACTIVATION SCHEDULE (CONT)

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>ACTIVATION PERIOD</u>
6th Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division	
1 battalion	07 Apr - 12 Apr 75
1 battalion	14 Apr - 19 Apr 75
1 battalion	21 Apr - 26 Apr 75
1 battalion	28 Apr - 03 May 75
2nd Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division	
1 battalion	07 Apr - 12 Apr 75
1 battalion	14 Apr - 19 Apr 75
1 battalion	21 Apr - 26 Apr 75
1 battalion	28 Apr - 03 May 75
41st Regiment, 22nd Infantry Division	
1 battalion	07 Apr - 12 Apr 75
1 battalion	14 Apr - 19 Apr 75
1 battalion	21 Apr - 26 Apr 75
1 battalion	28 Apr - 03 May 75
42nd Regiment, 22nd Infantry Division	
1 battalion	07 Apr - 12 Apr 75
1 battalion	14 Apr - 19 Apr 75
1 battalion	21 Apr - 26 Apr 75
1 battalion	28 Apr - 03 May 75
40th Regiment, 22nd Infantry Division	
1 battalion	07 Apr - 12 Apr 75
1 battalion	14 Apr - 19 Apr 75
1 battalion	21 Apr - 26 Apr 75
1 battalion	28 Apr - 03 May 75
Artillery Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division (105mm)	
2 batteries	07 Apr - 12 Apr 75
1 battery	14 Apr - 26 Apr 75
Artillery Battery, 2nd Infantry Division (155mm)	07 Apr - 19 Apr 75
Artillery Battery, 22nd Infantry Division (105mm)	07 Apr - 19 Apr 75
Artillery Battery, 3rd Infantry Division (105mm)	14 Apr - 26 Apr 75
Armored Cav Sqdn, 2nd Inf Div	07 Apr - 12 Apr 75
Armored Cav Sqdn, 22nd Inf Div	14 Apr - 26 Apr 75
MP Co, 2nd Inf Div	14 Apr - 26 Apr 75
MP Co, 3rd Inf Div	14 Apr - 26 Apr 75
MP Co, 22nd Inf Div	14 Apr - 26 Apr 75
1st MP Bn	14 Apr - 24 May 75
2nd MP Bn	14 Apr - 24 May 75

(10) The ARVN followed the progress of the Congressional hearings very closely. As the prospect failed for passage of the full \$722 million package requested by the President, the planning figure was reviewed by the RVNAF and a modified plan geared to a \$350

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million appropriation was developed. This was prepared and completed during the period 19 - 21 April 1975. A major items package of \$145 million was developed by ARVN and submitted to Army Division. This planning data was transmitted by message to DA, DOD, JCS, and CINCPAC on 21 April 1975.

(a) This planning action was completely dependent upon Congressional approval of supplemental funds. The materiel for reconstitution of ARVN forces represented by the \$145.3 million was to reequip light infantry combat units, provide maximum firepower, minimum combat service support, and sufficient communications for tactical operations. A list of units to have been reconstituted, by priority and unit/total cost to equip, is shown below:

<u>PRIORITY</u>	<u>TYPE UNIT</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>COST/UNIT (MILLIONS)</u>	<u>TOTAL COST (MILLIONS)</u>
1	Infantry Div	3	\$18.831	\$ 56.493
2	Ranger Div	2	11.727	23.454
3	Separate Inf Regt	11	2.533	27.863
4	M48A3 Tank Sqdn	1	22.700	22.700
5	Armored Cav Sqdn (M113)	1	8.340	8.340
6	Arty Bn (155mm)	2	1.461	2.922
7	Light Truck Co	1	1.300	1.300
8	Signal Bn	1	2.250	2.250
				<hr/>
				\$145.322

(b) Description data of principal combat units to be reconstituted is as follows:

1 Three infantry divisions -- These divisions would contain only the combat regiments and supporting division artillery. Each regiment would have four infantry battalions, and each of the battalions four rifle companies. Division artillery would be organized with three 105mm howitzer battalions (4 tubes per battery) and one 155mm howitzer battalion. Armor, cavalry, and combat service support type units were not included.

2 Two ranger divisions -- Each ranger division would consist of three ranger groups of four battalions; each battalion with four rifle companies. This action would involve reorganization of existing units. Equipment to be added was based on the equipment differential to constitute the tactical elements of a ranger division. Artillery would consist of three 105mm howitzer battalions (four tubes per battery) and one 155mm howitzer battalion.

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3 Modification of 11 RF regiments into separate mobile infantry regiments -- This action would make regular separate infantry regiments from regional forces units in MR 4 and MR 3. Equipment was based on the differential requirements for shoot, move and communicate items. Plans called for the modification of seven regiments in MR 4 and four in MR 3.

4 One M48A3 tank squadron -- Since no armor units had been included in the infantry divisions to be reconstituted, a separate tank squadron was to be organized. The M48A3 would have had to be used since the M41 was a nonstandard, out of production item in the US inventory.

5 Two 155mm howitzer battalions -- These artillery units would be used for general support to augment existing artillery in the Saigon area. Each battalion would be equipped with 12 tubes or 4 per battery.

(c) The priorities for materiel movement to meet the unit priorities were established as follows:

## 1 Airlift

### PRIORITY

- 1 Individual and crew served weapons and TOW missiles.
- 2 Communications equipment.
- 3 Artillery (105mm howitzer).

## 2 Surface Transportation

### PRIORITY

- 1 Tanks, M48A3.
- 2 Armored Personnel Carrier, M113.
- 3 Artillery (155mm howitzer) and Truck 5T Cargo.
- 4 Truck, Cargo 2-1/2 Ton.
- 5 Truck, Cargo 1/4 Ton and 3/4 Ton.

(11) While a number of reconstitution plans were developed in the last 30 days of the conflict, the major governing factors in each were:

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- (a) Available FY75 DAV funds to call forward materiel.
- (b) Delivery reaction time and the ever present cost consideration for airlift.
- (c) Contingency options based upon approval of supplemental FY 75 appropriations.
- (d) Minimum acceptable equipment levels to provide a combat capability.
- (e) Priorities and how they were established.
- (f) Availability of personnel resources and the leadership element.
- (g) Assessment of the threat and how to phase reconstitution to meet that threat.

Throughout the planning process, ARVN appeared to be geared to the complete reconstitution effort, which was dependent upon supplemental funds.

b. Programming and defined lines called forward:

(1) To meet the immediate threat, all materiel requirements placed on CONUS supply sources for the reconstitution of forces were funded by FY75 DAV reprogramming actions or expedite actions on prior year calls forward.

(2) The FY75 DAV Program at the beginning of the fiscal year included only \$500,000 for defined lines. The stated requirement was \$123.5 million leaving a shortfall of \$123.0 million. The funded portion was for optics and fire control materiel only. The defined lines program as of 28 April 1975 was as follows:

	AMOUNT (In millions)	<u>FOR</u>
Initial funding	\$ .5	Optics and fire control
Reprogramming (1 Jul 74 - 15 Mar 75)	.3	AM/PRC 25 radios
Reprogramming (16 Mar - 28 Apr 75)	13.8	Reconstitution of forces; weapons, signal, TOE equipment
Total FY75 DAV Defined Lines Program	<hr/> \$14.6	

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(3) The decision to reprogram funds for defined lines had serious trade-off implications. At the beginning of the 4th quarter, the available dollars remaining in the Army Division portion of the program was severely limited. All ammunition funds had been committed by requisitions covering delivery through June 1975. Ammunition losses in MR 1 and MR 2 were significant and reprogramming action was necessary to balance stocks of critical self-defense munitions. Prior year materiel charges for general supply were estimated at \$3.2 million and for POL from \$6-10 million. In addition, the ASC had not been able to process a replenishment requisition for RO shortages since December 1973 and most RO lines were at 40% zero balance. Other DAO unprogrammed costs further limited flexibility to include higher estimated PCH&T. Initial funds estimated to reconstitute the 18 infantry battalions and 3 artillery batteries was approximately \$12 million. Total requirements were compared with materiel on hand, materiel due in by expedited delivery, prior year calls forward which had not been expedited and those actions for which funds required reprogramming.

(4) Reprogramming actions taken to support the 2 April 1975 reconstitution effort were as follows:

<u>FOR</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u> <u>(In millions)</u>
Major items (defined lines)	\$4.06
Other FOE lines (dollar lines)	.37
Clothing and equipment (18 Bn/ 3 Arty Btry) (15,000 personnel)	1.06
Clothing and equipment (30,000 personnel)	<u>1.50</u>
	\$6.99

(5) On 21 April 1975, an additional reprogramming action was taken to bring in \$9.2 million of shoot and communicate equipment. Information was received from the International Logistics Center after establishment of the DAO Residual Office at Fort Shafter, that no supply action was taken on this call forward.

(6) Air delivery of this materiel was requested. Special mission airlift was requested for only one delivery -- five M113 armored personnel carriers -- for immediate issue to combat units. Channel air, the least expensive air delivery mode, was requested for the remainder of the materiel. PCH&T charges for the airlift have not been provided, but estimates from CONUS sources in late April 1975 indicated charges of approximately \$7 million had been accrued.

c. Execution:

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(1) ARVN implemented the reconstitution plan issued on 5 Apr 75, and authenticated by the Chief of Staff, JGS. The materiel requirements placed on CONUS for the 18 infantry battalions, three artillery batteries and 45,000 sets of individual equipment, were used to support this plan. Other assets were generated in-country from maintenance repair and rebuild, materiel in stock in the ARVN depots and that redistributed from lesser priority units, supplemented by materiel requisitioned from CONUS.

(2) To control the materiel received from airlift and other supply actions in process, the following measures were taken:

(a) Coordination was established with Air Force Division personnel responsible for the aerial port operation.

(b) DAO technical assistance personnel from the 1st AAD were assigned to monitor and record receipts. A daily receipt report was maintained.

(c) The ASC placed personnel at the aerial port to record receipts, receive a copy of documentation and to report receipts to the Supply Management Division of the ASC.

(d) An ARVN transportation coordinator was assigned to the aerial port.

(e) The 1st AAD established expedited receipt procedures and cross-checked with the aerial port on materiel outloaded. A DAO technical assistance representative monitored the operation.

(f) A staging and unit issue area was established at the 1st AAD to expedite issue to using units.

(g) A representative of the ASC was stationed at the 1st AAD to report receipts and process materiel release orders for issue to units.

(h) A daily report was submitted to CONUS and CINCPAC agencies for management purposes.

(i) Liaison personnel detailed from the Defense Audit Agency followed up on the receipt and issue process to identify bottlenecks and inform the Resource Management Branch, Army Division of problem areas.

(j) Maximum use of lateral transfer of material between using organizations was directed and controlled by the ASC.

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(k) A daily maintenance production report for key items of shoot, move and communicate equipment was provided to the Director of Maintenance, CLC; the Commander, ASC; and the Army Division. This report was used to monitor production and to expedite issues to supported/reconstituted units.

(1) Materiel expeditors detailed from the RVNAF Inspector General Office were stationed at the 1st AAD and the Vietnamese Army Arsenal to search for repair parts required for maintenance programs. Lists of parts which were line-stoppers or for equipment deadlined for parts were provided to the ASC and the materiel expeditors for supply action.

(3) Response by CONUS supply sources to the DAO requests for expedited delivery of materiel was excellent. Department of the Army did restrict issue of AN/GRC 46 and 47 radios and rocket launcher XM202 from the calls forward made for reconstitution. Increased emphasis was placed by DAO on the rebuild of these type radios at the 60th Signal Base Depot and some progress was made; however, the lack of installation kits prevented the full utilization of these assets. The 66mm LAW was issued in lieu of the XM202 rocket launcher for authorized units.

(4) Priorities were given to the VNMC Division, the Airborne Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, and 22nd Infantry Division in that order; however, proliferation of organizations to be refilled did occur, resulting in competing supply actions for limited materiel resources. As a result, the priority system appeared to be prostituted and the tactical capability diluted. The following table shows units which received equipment under the reconstitution effort in addition to the replacement of combat losses for other deployed units:

## SUMMARY RECONSTITUTION OF ARVN FORCES AS OF 29 APRIL 1975

UNIT	% EQUIP AUTH BY CLC COVERED BY SUPPLY ACTION			REMARKS
	% WPNS	% VEH	% SIG	
3 Abn bns	80	60	60	Unk Status
3rd Bde, Abn Div	90	100	60	Deployed
1 Arty bn, abn	80	-	-	Unk Status
2(ea) bde, Marine Div	85	50	80	Deployed
2(ea) arty bn, Marine Div	100	-	-	Deployed
1 regt, 2nd Div	60	70	80	Deployed

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## SUMMARY - RECONSTITUTION OF ARVN FORCES (CONT)

UNIT	% EQUIP AUTH BY CLC COVERED BY SUPPLY ACTION			REMARKS
	% WPNS	% VEH	% SIG	
1 Arty bn, 2nd Div	80	-	-	Deployed
6th Ranger Group	90	60	30	Deployed
1 arty btry, 6th Rgr	100	-	-	Deployed
4th Ranger Group	90	50	30	Not Deployed
1 arty btry, 4th Rgr	100	-	-	Not Deployed
1 regt, 3rd Div	95	80	10	Deployed
1 arty btry, 3rd Div	0	-	-	Not Deployed
2(ea) regt, 22nd Div	95	95	90	Deployed
1 Arty Bn, 22nd Div	100	-	-	Deployed + 8 ea - 155mm howitzer
7th Ranger Group	95	50	60	Deployed
1 arty btry, 7th Rgr	100	-	-	Not Deployed
24th Ranger Group	65	N/A	55	Not Deployed
1st MP Bn	60	N/A	30	Unk Status
2nd MP Bn	60	N/A	30	Unk Status
106th Sig Bn, Ranger Div	N/A	100	95	Unk Status
9th Ranger Group	N/A	N/A	80	Deployed
18th Inf Div	N/A	N/A	95	Deployed

d. Summary:

(1) The RVNAF planning process for the reconstitution of forces was characterized by the following:

(a) Lack of aggressive leadership and timely recognition by tactical planners and operations personnel of the RVNAF JGS of the requirement to reconstitute forces.

(b) Unrealistic planning factors. Initial plans were based entirely on sizeable supplemental appropriations by Congress. Time phasing was not responsive to meet the threat; there was reluctance to use available on hand assets to meet immediate needs and inertia in reallocation of materiel from lesser priority units, the use of

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substitution of items from in-country assets, and the use of maintenance float/attrition float stocks.

(c) An initial lack of participation on the part of the RVNAF JGS in the planning process.

(d) The CLC and the ASC did respond with detailed materiel requirements and planning data for the materiel support aspects of the plans developed. It appeared that this aspect was the principal driving force by RVNAF in the initial stages of reconstitution planning.

(2) The following conclusions pertain to the execution aspects of the reconstitution plan:

(a) Department of the Army did respond to the initial ARVN equipment requirements expedited and called forward from 20 March through 15 April 1975.

(b) Issue priorities established for units were not followed to the degree necessary to field fully combat effective units.

(c) A shortage of communications equipment for tactical elements existed based on TOE authorizations and materiel available for issue.

(d) ARVN did not fully utilize on hand serviceable M1 rifles and carbines (M1 and M2) for issue to reconstituted units and/or to lower priority units although in excess of 60 days of supply of principal types of ammunition for these weapons was on hand.

(e) The forces required to be reconstituted to meet the threat exceeded the time available to complete this action and the materiel resources that could be obtained with available FY 75 DAV funds.

(f) With sufficient reaction time, the maintenance system provided the best opportunity and source to obtain materiel assets. Although it became more responsive, the collection of unserviceable assets, classification, and increased production output required more reaction time to become fully effective for issue of equipment to new units.

(g) Units reconstituted were not deployed as shown in the initial concept. Rather than attach a battalion or regimental sized unit to existing divisions, the newly-constituted units retained structure and organization titles from major units that had moved

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from MR 1 and MR 2, and were principally independently deployed. For example, the regiment of the 2nd Infantry Division was deployed to Phan Rang immediately, and was destroyed.

## 7. PETROLEUM OIL AND LUBRICANTS (POL).

a. During the month of March 1975, approximately 163M Barrels (BBL) of fuel was lost to enemy action. Very little of this product was known to have been destroyed by the RVNAF prior to enemy take over. Extensive efforts were made to evacuate POL products from areas that were expected to fall. Approximately 25M BBL were known to have been evacuated.

b. Ground fuel consumption for Diesel Fuel Marine (DFM) was estimated to drop from 223M BBL to 165M BBL per month; MOGAS from 70M BBL to 43M BBL per month. Decreases were primarily due to losses of territory and large number of vehicles.

c. Aviation fuels consumption had shown a steady increase from approximately 15M BBL to 30M BBL per month for AVGAS and from 115M BBL to 135M BBL per month for JP-4. Estimates were that AVGAS consumption would go as high as 40M BBL per month and JP-4 to 150M BBL per month during the next quarter.

d. During March and April 1975 continued attempts were made to evacuate product from up-country locations -- Da Nang, Qui Nhon and Nha Trang. Due to the heavy flow of refugees and the reluctance of ship and barge owners to commit vessels due to security conditions, the ability to avoid loss of POL was reduced.

e. Due to the deteriorating security on the Saigon River, commercial oil companies were at first reluctant, and in mid-April refused, to bring ocean tankers into Nha Be. Contingency plans were formulated to make ship-to-ship transfer of products at sea off Vung Tau.

f. ARVN POL battalions in ALC I, II, and IV had contingency plans for removal or destruction of POL terminals. For unknown reasons, orders were not released and none of the POL depots were destroyed. This meant turning over large amounts of POL to the enemy.

## 8. PORT OPERATIONS.

a. On 29 March 1973, RVNAF assumed responsibility for military port operations less Military Standard Transportation and Movement Procedures (MILSTAMP) documentation functions which were performed by a US contractor, Alaska Barge and Transport, Inc. Stevedoring was performed by ARVN military personnel and Vietnamese commercial

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companies under contract with ARVN. Tonnage handled through ARVN operated water terminals during the period 1 April 1973 through 2 March 1975 amounted to 956,064 Measurement Tons (MT) inbound and 39,902 MT outbound for RVNAF with US interest cargo totaling 139,656 MT inbound and 90,862 MT outbound. Due to increased hostilities, inaccuracies and the lack of performance reporting, no reliable data could be collected for the remaining period.

b. In January and February 1975, the intracoastal cargo backlog at military water terminals continued to be reduced. The efforts of transportation managers resulted in improved utilization of commercial coasters, LST's, and other military watercraft. However, by late March, as the tactical situation deteriorated with the subsequent rapid loss of territory, RVNAF vessels were used primarily to evacuate military personnel and refugees. By 25 March 1975, it was determined that the volume of personnel to be moved far exceeded the capability of RVNAF controlled shipping. Consequently, five tugs with six barges and three cargo vessels under the control of the Military Sealift Command were diverted to provide initial augmentation to the RVNAF evacuation effort. These and other Military Sealift Command assets remained committed to refugee movements until final relocations were completed to offshore destinations.

c. Due to increased hostilities and the commitment of most floating assets to refugee evacuation, data pertinent to cargo handling was not reported for the months of March and April 1975.

## 9. RVNAF FACILITIES ENGINEERING SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM.

a. The ARVN Engineers, with contractor assistance, completed several major projects to include:

(1) Refurbishment of the 534th Ammo Renovation Facility at Long Binh.

(2) Refurbishment of the 551st Ammo Renovation Facility at Dong Ba Thin.

(3) Completion of a power survey of the Vietnamese Army Arsenal and surrounding ARVN facilities which, if implemented, would have resulted in a minimum yearly savings of \$50,000.

b. Twelve wells were renovated and put in service. The number of inoperative wells was reduced from 60 to 55.

c. Of the 19 overhauls of diesel generators in fixed power plants on SIMS sites which were begun, 13 were known to have been completed.

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d. The NVA offensive in MR 1, which comprised the 1st ALC, necessitated termination of the self-sufficiency program in that region in late March 1975, just prior to the fall of Da Nang. All US and Third Country National (TCN) contractor personnel were safely extracted prior to the fall of the city. These personnel were subsequently assigned to augment contractor staffing at ARVN facilities in the 3rd and 4th ALC's. In MR 2, which included the 2nd and 5th ALC's, the program was terminated prior to the fall of Qui Nhon and Nha Trang. As was the case in MR 1, all US and TCN contractor personnel were safely extracted and used to augment the contractors' work force at locations in the 3rd and 4th ALC's. In both MR's, the contractors' facilities, supplies and equipment, all of which was GFP or on hand receipt from ARVN, was lost during the evacuation. However, contractor personnel reported that all assigned equipment was destroyed and/or rendered unuseable prior to their departure.

e. By early April, it was apparent to most that all of South Vietnam was in grave danger of being overrun. The NVA offensive was continuing unchecked, and the level of hostilities in MR 3 and MR 4 was intensifying. During this same time frame, guidance was received to reduce the number of US and TCN direct hire and contractor personnel remaining in Vietnam to the minimum needed to carry on essential programs. It was under these circumstances that the contractor, on 7 April 1975, was directed to terminate its effort in support of the self-sufficiency program, and DAO sponsorship and participation in the program ended. The contractor's operations were quickly closed out and all US and TCN personnel were evacuated well before the final collapse of the Saigon Government.

## 10. ARVN LINES OF COMMUNICATION (LOC) PROGRAM.

a. Very little progress was realized in the construction of roads and bridges being accomplished under the ARVN LOC Program. Lack of progress was attributable to the deteriorating security situation in MR 2 and insufficient supplies of rock in the delta.

b. The massive NVA offensive in the central highlands brought an abrupt ending to the ARVN LOC Program in the MR 2 area. The offensive necessitated abandonment of the LOC industrial work sites at Ban Me Thuot, Phu Cuong, and Tam Bo. All supplies, facilities and equipment located at these sites were lost (reports that these assets were destroyed by ARVN prior to pulling out were received but never confirmed). The three engineer construction battalions operating these sites likewise perished. Some troops managed to reach safety in areas still controlled by the Government; however, the units were never reconstituted and few of the men were re-assimilated back into active ARVN units.

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c. US personnel employed by Dynalection Corporation, the US firm involved in providing maintenance and repair services in support of construction equipment used in the LOC Program, were stationed at the industrial work sites in MR 2 at the time of their abandonment; however, all of these personnel managed to safely reach Nha Trang from where they were subsequently evacuated to Saigon.

d. In mid-April, the Dynalection contract was terminated. It was quickly closed out and all US personnel employed by the contractor were evacuated well before the fall of Saigon.

e. The LOC industrial work sites in the delta continued to remain active through the duration of the NVA Offensive. It is assumed that these sites were surrendered intact following the collapse of the Saigon regime.

11. SPECIAL CATEGORY ARMY WITH AIR FORCE (SCARWAF). No significant events occurred during the quarter. This program was still being held in abeyance for additional funding.

12. RETROGRADE PROGRAM. Except for the four General Motors 1500 KW generators which served DAO facilities on Tan Son Nhut Air Base, the planned retrograde of US Army equipment left in Vietnam following the withdrawal of US Forces was completed.

13. ARVN AGRICULTURE AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY PROGRAM. Programs as previously reported; however, no significant reportable events occurred.

14. PROCUREMENT.

a. In-Country Procurement (ICP) specifications. Through coordination by the RVNAF ICP committee, the ARVN technical services were able to introduce requirements of their specific functional areas into the new series of ICP specifications. The original basic specification format had been expanded to include more detail on the quality assurance requirements for improved end item reliability. Specifications for approximately 100 quartermaster, engineer, signal, and medical items had been rewritten by Army Procurement Branch personnel in coordination with the ICP committee and the ARVN technical services. New standards developed by the National Standards Institute had been used extensively in the rewrite effort; however, DAO Procurement Branch still had to provide technical assistance in supplying provisions to insure adequate contractor quality control measures.

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b. Canned rations. The ARVN Quartermaster and Medical Service Corps had approved new specifications which reflected a revised approach for controlling the canning process. This revision was developed as a result of the joint DAO/RVNAF study of the causes of spoilage of canned food procured under the ICP Program. The Military Food Inspection Detachment and the Food Control Laboratory had increased the scope of their inspection services to evaluate process controls more fully; however, ARVN quality assurance personnel continued to provide assistance for in-plant inspections and laboratory studies to identify quality deficiencies and provide recommendations for early corrective action.

c. Acceptance of supplies for RVNAF.

(1) Due to the drawdown in early April of US personnel assigned to Procurement Branch, it became increasingly difficult to provide adequate staffing to satisfy the requirement for US personnel to perform final acceptance of supplies procured with US Government funds. On 20 April the Purchasing Office was directed to reduce US staffing to two personnel by 26 April; however, in order to insure the continued flow of supplies from ICP contractors to RVNAF, one additional US employee was authorized for the residual staff to accomplish the quality assurance function.

(2) Due to the volume of deliveries scheduled and the austere staffing level, a new procedure for final inspection, acceptance, and title transfer was formulated to expedite delivery of contracted supplies to RVNAF. Under this procedure the ARVN agreed to designate the 70th Base Depot in Saigon as the receiving point in lieu of the 1st ARVN Associated Depot at Long Binh. In addition, under the revised procedures, acceptance by the US Government would be at the contractor's facility, while ARVN would verify the condition, count and take possession from the contractor at the depot.

d. Cancellation of FY75 RVNAF Subsistence Requirements.

(1) Subsequent to the RVNAF strategic withdrawal from MR 1 and the highlands of MR 2, the pressing need for funds to provide critical supplies necessary to reconstitute ARVN resulted in reevaluation of FY75 requirements for combat rations. On 22 March 1975, it was determined that approximately \$2.9 million identified for FY75 in-country procurement of canned pork and dehydrated rice could be made available immediately since none of the requirements had yet been placed on contract. For those early FY75 requirements for dehydrated rice which were already under contract, it was estimated that possible savings of \$150,000 might be realized from one contractor if the contract were terminated for the convenience of the government.

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(2) After consultation with the CLC Commander, requirements for canned pork and dehydrated rice were cancelled in those instances where contracts had not been awarded. Rationale for this decision was based on the fact that with the pull back of the RVNAF in many areas into coastal enclaves, the need for operational rations assumed less importance since the shortened supply lines reduced the quantities of combat rations needed to support the front line troops.

e. Reprocurement of dehydrated rice rations.

(1) On 31 May 1974, the Army Contract Adjustment Board denied two contractors' applications for extraordinary contractual relief, pursuant to Public Law 85-804. Subsequently, both contracts were terminated for default and reprocurement of the undelivered rice rations was initiated late in Calendar Year 1974, using the unliquidated fund balances remaining on the defaulted contracts which were awarded in FY72 and FY73.

(2) On 4 February 1975, Headquarters, Department of the Army suspended all subsistence reprocurement pending clarification of the FY73 MPA Program status. On 27 February this restriction was removed by Headquarters, Department of the Army but then reimposed on 27 March 1975, apparently as a result of further review of the reprocurement action at the OSD level. Contracts for \$2.3 million of dehydrated rice rations were ready for award on 28 March at the time of receipt of the last suspension notice.

(3) The rationale behind the DA-directed suspension of this reprocurement was never provided and the release of funds never received. By 21 April 1975, the general military situation dictated that the reprocurement action be abandoned, thus depriving RVNAF of approximately three million dehydrated rice rations for the combat troops and the loss of the FY73 funds.

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## CHAPTER 6

VIETNAMESE AIR FORCE (VNAF)1. (U) INTRODUCTION.

Even prior to the NVA attack in March, lack of funds had degraded VNAF capabilities. It was necessary to reprogram funds on a continuing basis to support the aircraft fleet. Many projects and activities were overtaken by events of the March-April NVA offensive.

2. (S) AUTHORIZED STRENGTH AND ASSIGNED PERSONNEL.

a. VNAF manning as of 28 February 1975\* reflects the following:

<u>PERSONNEL</u>	<u>Figure 6-1a</u>	
	<u>AUTHORIZED</u>	<u>ASSIGNED/PERCENT</u>
Officers	10,193	8,128 80%
Enlisted	54,712	54,321 99%
Civilian	762	669 88%
TOTAL	65,667	63,118 96%

NOTE: March figures not available.

b. As of February 1975, VNAF pilot manning and other crew positions, were sufficient to fly available aircraft on a sustained surge basis. Assigned squadron crews (1535) represented 73% of the authorized manning level. Most were capable of performing the basic combat missions. Ninety percent of assigned personnel were operationally ready (OR). Figure 6-2 shows the manning by type of aircraft.

3. (S) VNAF FORCE DEPLOYMENT.

The rapid withdrawal of Republic of Vietnam (RVN) forces from Military Regions (MR) 1 & 2 during March and April 1975 resulted in abandonment of five air bases (Pleiku, Da Nang, Phu Cat, Nha Trang and Phan Rang), deactivation of six tactical wing headquarters, 17 squadrons and three search and rescue helicopter detachments. Remnants of aircraft and manpower were reassigned to units located at the remaining air bases. The adjusted force deployment is reflected in Figures 6-3 and 6-4.

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VNAF PERSONNEL BY ORGANIZATION

UNIT/DIVISION	OFFICER		ENLISTED		TOTAL MIL		CIVILIAN	
	AUTH	ASGD	AUTH	ASGD	AUTH	ASGD	AUTH	ASGD
VNAF HQ	884	650	1,927	1,757	2,811	2,407	45	35
Air Medical Center	62	37	174	128	236	165	6	4
Air Ops Comd	425	281	872	684	1,297	965	0	0
AC&W Gp	158	153	869	805	1,027	958	1	1
Air Tech Log Comd	403	300	5,932	5,155	6,335	5,455	369	323
Air Tng Cen	487	328	1,170	1,005	1,657	1,333	7	7
TSN Prop Const Area	19	12	62	49	81	61	0	0
Air Adm Unit	17	16	117	131	134	147	0	5
Detached Pers	122	179	63	169	185	348	0	0
1st Air Div	1,237	891	7,027	6,055	8,264	6,946	105	89
2nd Air Div	1,033	725	5,889	6,060	6,922	6,785	22	22
3rd Air Div	1,313	954	7,732	6,765	9,045	7,719	70	66
4th Air Div	1,364	955	7,397	6,226	8,761	7,181	32	18
5th Air Div	1,298	1,045	6,650	6,000	7,948	7,045	95	92
6th Air Div	1,123	802	6,380	5,637	7,503	6,439	10	7
Sub Total	9,945	7,328	52,261	46,626	62,206	53,954		
Pipeline	248	800	2,451	7,695	2,699	8,495		
Total	10,193	8,128	54,712	54,321	64,905	62,449	762	669

Figure 6-1b

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## VNAF AIRCREWS\*

TYPE A/C	AUTH	ASGD	OR	% OR
<b>Fighter</b>				
A-37	350	334	232	69
F-5	217	105	103	98
<b>Total</b>	<b>567</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>Transport</b>				
C-130	54	55	43	78
C-119G	20	21	17	81
<b>Total</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>Reconnaissance</b>				
EC-47	45	41	41	100
RC-47	22	23	16	70
U-6	10	12	12	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>Helicopter</b>				
UH-1	949	558	554	99
CH-47	80	64	50	78
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,029</b>	<b>622</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>Liaison</b>				
VC-47	8	10	10	100
U-17, O-1	329	281	281	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Gunship</b>				
AC-119K	29	31	28	90
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>90</b>

\* March data not available at publication.  
Deactivated aircraft crews not included.

Figure 6-2

6-5

**SECRET**

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VNAF FORCE DEPLOYMENT		
AIR BASES	NUMBER/TYPE AIRCRAFT*	
MR 3		
BIEN HOA	151	UH-1
	20	CH-47
	37	A-1
	53	F-5A
	49	F-5E
	7	F-5B
	4	RF-5
	20	U-17
	56	O-1
	TAN SON NHUT	76
33		A-37
15		AC-119K
22		AC-119G
11		C-119G
35		C-7
9		VC-47
12		RC-47
30		EC-47
29		C-130
16		U-17
17		O-1
9		U-6
18		T-41
2		O-2
MR 4		
BINH THUY	54	UH-1
	69	A-37
	17	U-17
	41	O-1
CAN THO	161	UH-1
	12	CH-47
*NOTE: The number of aircraft reflects assignment (not actual location) figures as of 23 April 1975.		

Figure 6-3

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4. (C) VNAF AIRCRAFT INVENTORY.

<u>MODEL</u>	<u>ASGD 1 JAN 75</u>	<u>ASGD 28 MAR 75</u>	<u>ASGD 23 APR 75</u>
A-1	61	39	37
A-37	210	182	102
F-5A/B/E/RF	134	122	113
C-7	52	52	35
C-130	30	30	29
C/VC/AC/EC/RC-47	62	61	53
U-6	9	9	9
U-17	80	76	53
O-1	169	161	114
O-2	31	10	2
T-41	22	22	18
T-37	24	24	0
UH-1	734	696	442
CH-47	62	50	32
C/AC-119G/K	54	54	48
 	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL	1,734	1,588 <u>1/</u>	1,087 <u>2/</u>

1/ Between 1 January-31 March there were 44 air/operational losses. The remaining losses were abandoned by VNAF at Ban Me Thuot/Pleiku.

2/ No precise record of air/operational losses available; however, majority were abandoned at Da Nang/Phu Cat/Nha Trang/Phan Rang.

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## 5. (C) MAJOR EQUIPMENT STATUS.

a. Status of major VNAF equipment is depicted in Figures 6-5 through 6-9. The following paragraphs address factors causing fluctuations in Operational Ready (OR), Not Operational Ready Maintenance (NORM) and Not Operational Ready Supply (NORS) rates for helicopter, liaison, transport, gunship and fighter aircraft.

(1) Helicopter Aircraft: The NORS rate exceeded the VNAF objective and the major contributors were trunnion, reel, switch and connector. The trunnion, switch and connector are nonrepairable units that were in short supply and only NORS requisitions were being filled. A repair capability was established on the reel and this problem was resolved.

(2) Liaison Aircraft: Slow response by contractors to fill requisitions for spares replenishment and NORS items contributed to excessive NORS rate.

(3) Transport Aircraft: The excessive NORM rate was a result of C-130 aircraft fuel leaks. This problem was the primary contributing factor to the low OR rate. Although the NORS rate exceeded the VNAF standard, the 9% reported in March is a respectable rate. Repair capabilities were established on items creating NORS and aided in further reduction of the rate.

(4) Gunship Aircraft: Lack of VNAF repair capability and the return of the Due-In-For-Maintenance (DIFM) items to Continental United States (CONUS) were the contributing factors to the excessive NORS rate. Close follow-up was maintained on the movement of DIFM items and produced improved OR rates.

(5) Fighter Aircraft: The fleet NORS rate was excessive during this period due to the failure to forecast and requisition time change items. VNAF system manager personnel were instructed to monitor closely time change items which aided in the lowering of the NORS rate.

b. The overall upward trend in the NORM rate was attributed to the rapid increase in flying hours for this period. The UH-1s, A-37s and F-5As overflowed significantly, thereby disrupting the normal flow of scheduled maintenance.

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STANDARD

OR: 71.0%

NORM: 24%

NORS: 5.0%

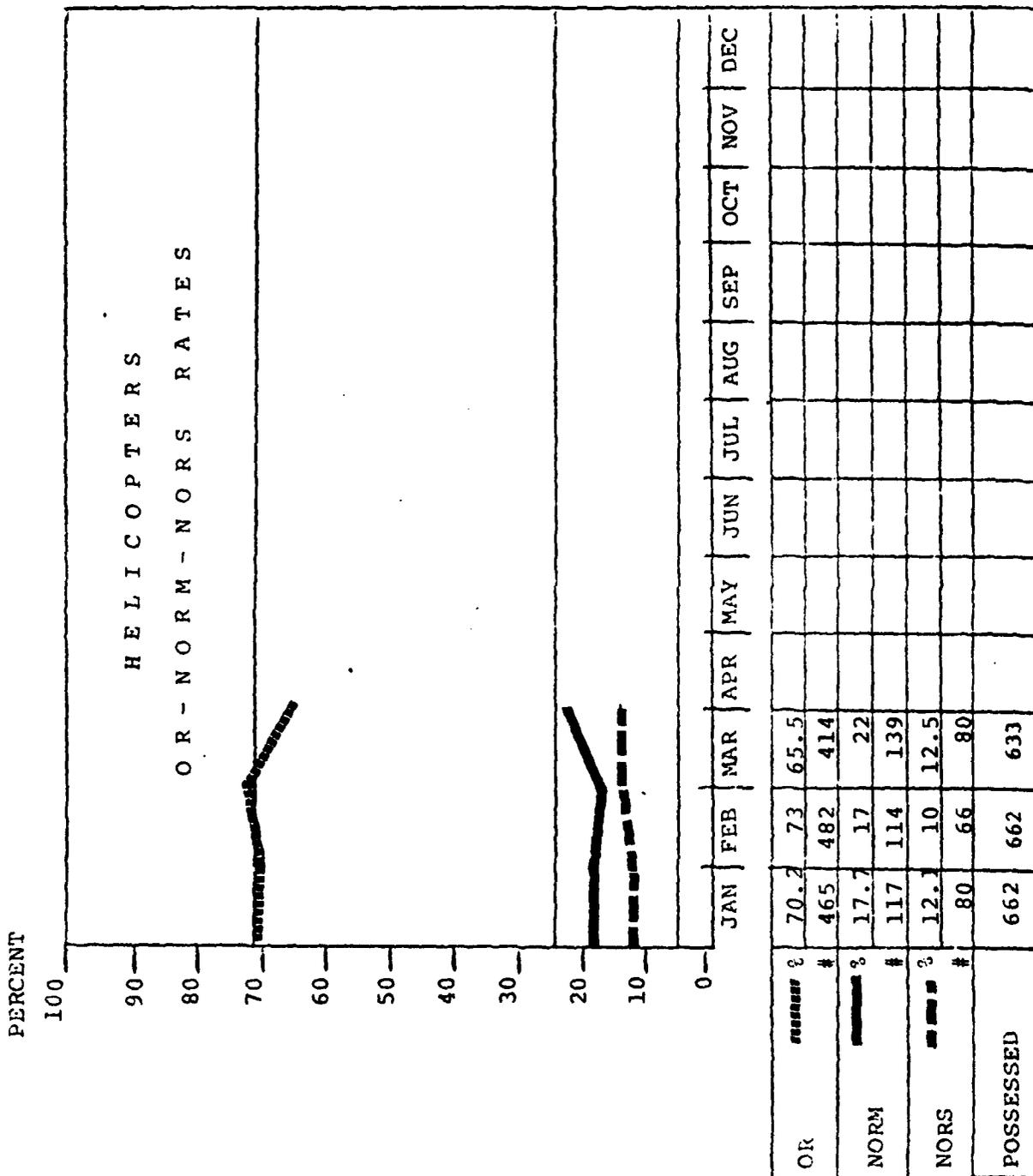


Figure 6-5

6-11

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STANDARD  
OR: 71.0%

NORM: 24%

NORS: 5.0%

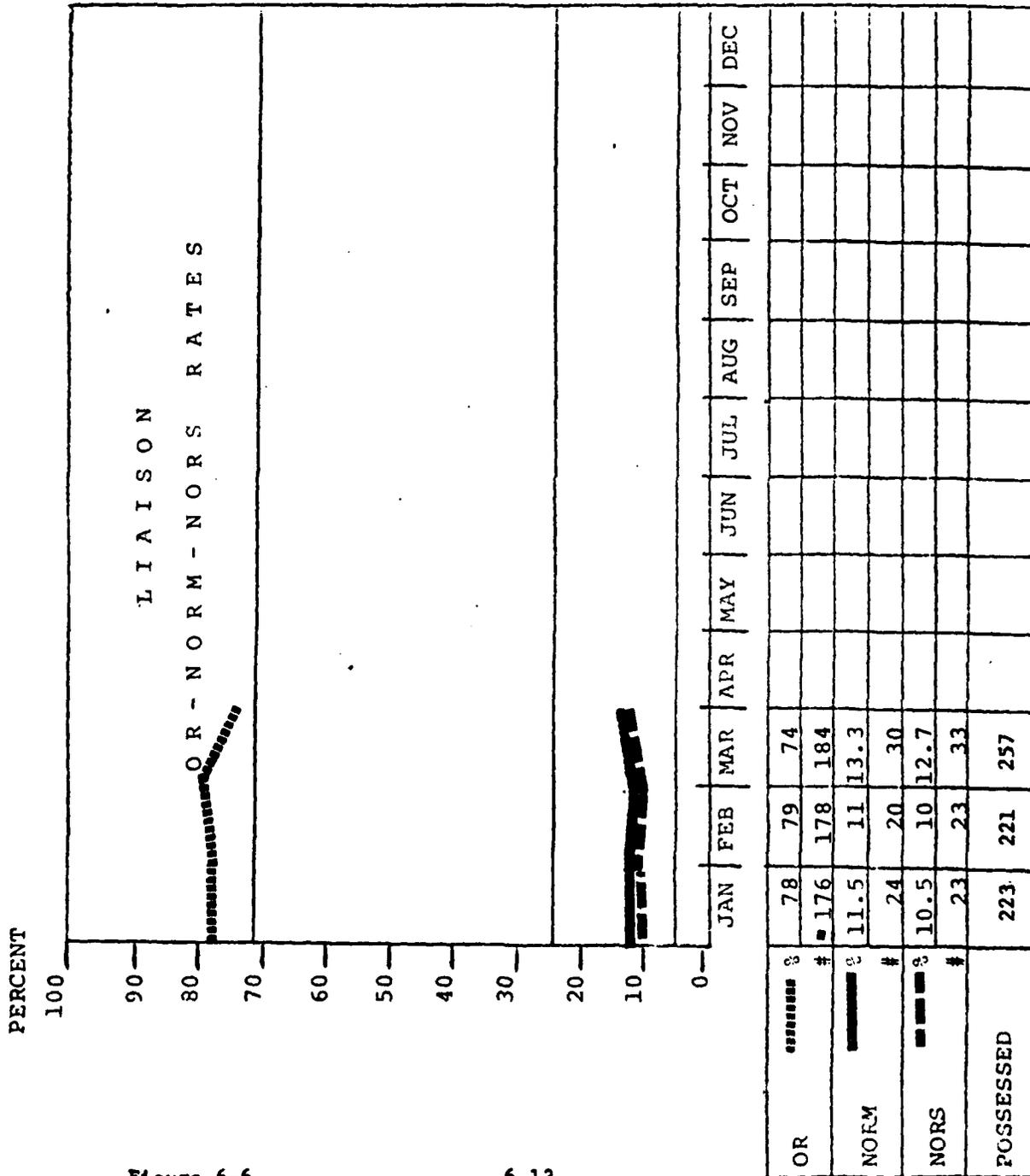


Figure 6-6

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STANDARD  
OR: 71.0%

NORM: 24%

NORS: 5.0%

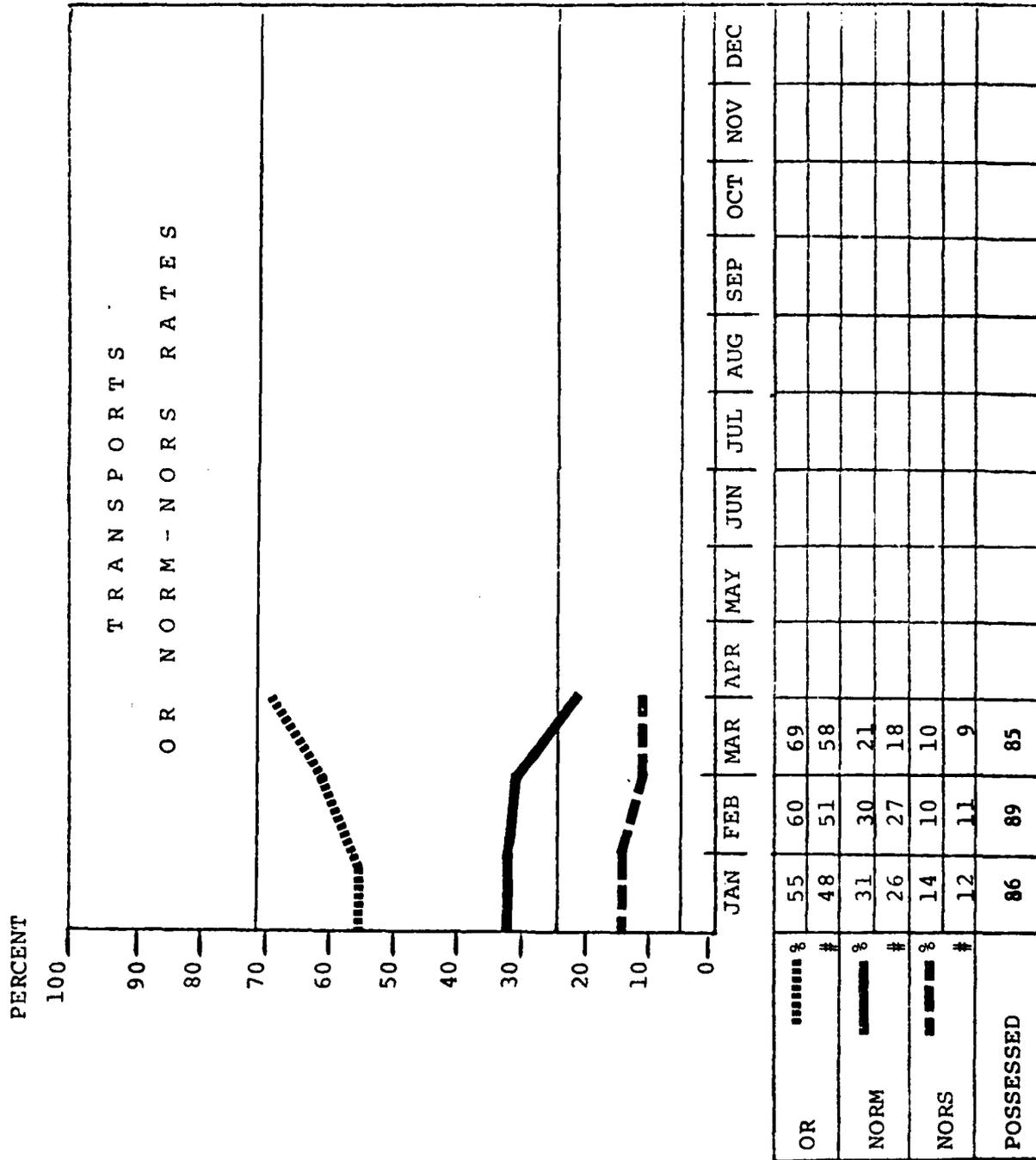


Figure 6-7

6-15

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STANDARD  
 OR: 71.0%  
 NORM: 24%  
 NORS: 5.0%

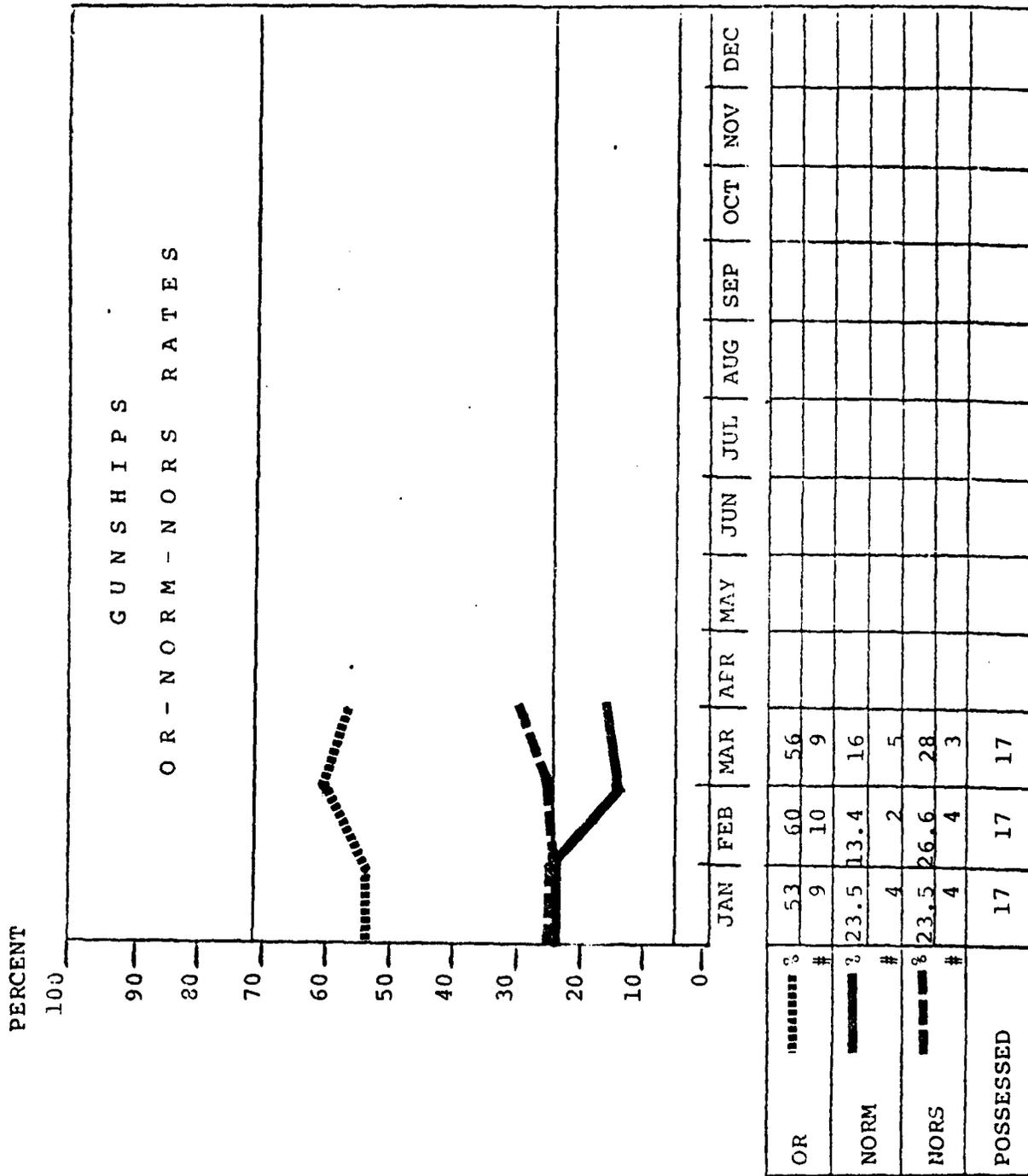


Figure 6-8

6-17

**CONFIDENTIAL**

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STANDARD  
 QR: 71.0%  
 NORM: 24%  
 NORS: 5.0%

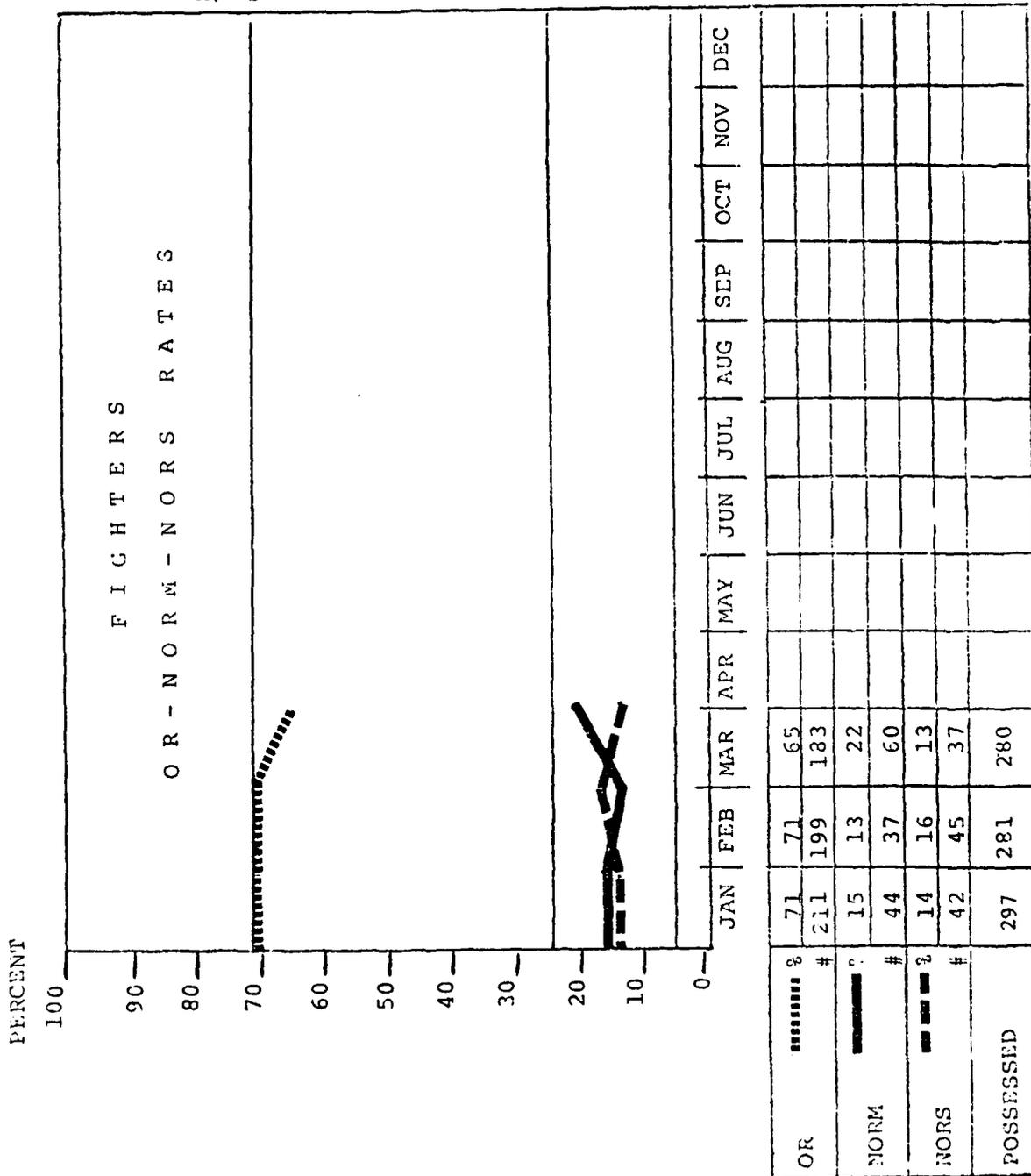


Figure 6-9

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## 6. (C) OPERATIONS.

a. General: The abandonment of Pleiku on 16 March 1975 and the fall of Ban Me Thuot on 18 March 1975 resulted in the loss of most equipment at those locations. Included were the Tactical Air Navigation (TACAN) and Aircraft Control and Warning (AC&W) systems at Ban Me Thuot and the TACAN, Ground Controlled Approach (GCA), AC&W and Nondirectional Beacon (NDB) at Pleiku. At Da Nang, VNAF abandoned the airfield and reportedly destroyed communications/navigation equipment at Monkey Mountain. Status of the Seek Point-Beacon Only Bombing System (BOES) site was unknown due to disruption of normal communications on 29 March 1975. Navigational Aids (NAVAIDS)/AC&W at Da Nang included GCA, TACAN, NDB and AC&W systems. In April, Phu Cat, Phan Rang and Nha Trang fell to the enemy with all NAVAIDS being lost.

b. BOBS: Overall OR rate for this period was 97%. The unit at Pleiku was moved to Nha Trang on 15 March and became operational on 25 March 1975. This equipment was subsequently abandoned at Nha Trang. Contact with the site at Monkey Mountain was lost 29 March 1975. Final disposition of the equipment is unknown.

c. Commando Gopher (Restoration of Ground Equipment): TACANs at Da Nang, Pleiku, Nha Trang, Tan Son Nhut, Bien Hoa and Binh Thuy were scheduled for removal from transportable shelters and installation in permanent buildings. Projected completion date had been 15 June 1975.

d. NAVAIDS: TACAN OR rate for the period was 78.6%. Units at Da Nang, Pleiku, Phu Cat and Phan Rang had a 95% OR rate when abandoned. Ban Me Thuot had an 18% OR rate when overrun. Nha Trang had a 47% OR rate attributed to parts shortages. The NDB rate was 72.6%. The unit at Da Nang was 25% OR through 28 March 1975. Phu Cat had a 79% OR rate due to a zero rate for 19 days, while awaiting flight check. The Binh Thuy NDB was down for technical and air conditioning problems which caused a 47% OR rate. The GCA rate was 70.6%. Pleiku had a 19% OR rate due to air conditioner problems when evacuated. The GCA OR rate at Bien Hoa was 70% for the period. Air conditioning problems caused the downtime.

e. AC&W: Overall status on the two primary components, search and height finder radars was 98 and 70% respectively. Systems at Ban Me Thuot, Pleiku and Da Nang (Monkey Mountain) were presumably destroyed. Systems at Tan Son Nhut and Binh Thuy were fully operational most of the period.

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f. VNAF Flying Hour Program: A comparison of Programmed (PROG) flying hours with actual hours flown during the third quarter of fiscal year 1975:

## VNAF FLYING HOUR PROGRAM

ACFT TYPE	JANUARY		FEBRUARY		MARCH*
	PROG	ACTUAL	PROG	ACTUAL	PROG
C-119G	120	373	120	249	120
AC-119K	272	322	272	227	
EC-47	1,344	1,167	1,028	1,155	1,028
RC-47	180	146	180	133	180
VC-47	80	56	80	112	80
C-130	1,248	679	902	603	902
O-1	5,726	6,499	5,726	6,115	5,726
U-6	320	335	320	325	320
U-17	811	816	811	730	811
F-5A/B	540	1,040	540	784	540
F-5E	530	579	530	279	530
RF-5	40	41	40	35	40
A-37	3,600	4,322	3,196	3,794	3,196
UH-1	8,268	12,617	9,334	10,773	9,334
CH-47	672	838	672	597	672
TOTAL	23,751	29,830	23,751	25,911	23,751

\*Actual March flying hours and prog/actual hours for April are not available.

Figure 6-10

### 7. (C) LOGISTICS.

#### a. Computer Events:

(1) Computer downtime continued to improve. Trends which caused downtime were: preventive maintenance, air conditioning malfunction and power fluctuation. Environmental control improved; double doors were installed to reduce dust, a VNAF guard was posted to keep out unauthorized visitors and every effort made to reduce traffic into the computer area, all of which reduced computer downtime. Due to improved computer utilization, there was a significant decrease in backlog on the "E" primary system. Downtime on the (DCT-2000) transceiver was 245 hours for the whole quarter, mostly due to equipment malfunction and communication line problems between Clark Air Base and Bien Hoa Air Base.

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(2) All actions relating to the conversion of Economic Order Quantity (EOQ) items from manual records at the VNAF bases to the "C" systems at the Air Technical Logistics Command (ATLC), including the upgrading of communication lines, were suspended pending a PACAF/VNAF/DAO review.

(3) Total computer utilization hours available during the third quarter of FY75 were 6,480. Figures 6-11 and 6-12 reflect computer downtime hours and causes.

COMPUTER DOWNTIME

<u>SYSTEM</u>	<u>JANUARY 75</u>	<u>FEBRUARY 75</u>	<u>MARCH 75</u>
"E" Primary	43	24	49
"E" Secondary	61	48	92
"B" Primary	66	24	49
TOTAL	170	96	190

Figure 6-11

DOWNTIME CAUSES

	<u>HOURS</u>
Remedial maintenance/hardware malfunction	47
Power fluctuation and/or outages	67
Inclement weather	40
Air conditioning	83
Rocket attack	10
Linkage check/preventive maintenance	209
TOTAL	456

Figure 6-12

b. Reparable Processing Center (RPC): The RPC program was operational. A reparable storage area was set up, and the R-26 report was produced on schedule by the computer.

c. Due-In-For-Maintenance (DIFM) Accounts: ATLC underwent reconciliation and physical inventory (17-30 March 1975) as a continuation of DIFM cleanup. Numerous past actions were taken which included correspondence to high-level VNAF officers requesting more emphasis be placed on the program. DAO personnel took part in the inventory and monitored to accomplish an acceptable standard of item accountability through all phases of the DIFM program.

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d. Corrosion Control Program: The Corrosion Control Program made some progress in the third quarter of FY75 but much of the progress was overcome by the enemy offensive. Among the significant advances were:

(1) Facilities: Washrack facilities were completed at Da Nang and Nha Trang. Can Tho slipped due to equipment failure. Funding was approved for the remaining washracks (Phan Rang, Binh Thuy and Phu Cat) and construction was originally scheduled to begin 1 June 1975. The enemy offensive necessitated cancellation or modification of those plans.

(2) Equipment and materials: There were sufficient equipment and supplies on hand at both Da Nang and Nha Trang for the program to become operational during this period. Most were abandoned.

e. Jet Engine Intermediate Maintenance Program (JEIM): The reduced flying hour program resulted in validation of JEIM requirements at all air divisions. Repair requirements and bench stock levels were revised, based upon the decrease in reparable generations resulting from the reduced flying hours. Recommendations pertaining to bench stock levels were sent to VNAF Headquarters for dissemination to using activities. A new minimum tool listing was approved and forwarded to VNAF Headquarters for updating the cost account/custody receipt listing at each air division. The Contractor Engineering Technical Services (CETS) at each air division were granted temporary authority to screen the warehouses for special tools and spare parts. Items found to be missing were identified and requirements were submitted to Air Force Logistics Command (AFLC) through the computer.

f. Status of VNAF Aerospace Ground Equipment (AGE) being repaired by contract at the end of the third quarter FY75 was as follows:

<u>UNITS</u>	<u>QUANTITY</u>
Contracted for repair	163
Shipped to contractor	163
In-Process for shipment	0
Received from contractor	82
Due from contractor	81

g. Quality Assurance: The Quality Assurance Office of the Air Force Division published a VNAF Quality Assurance Manual 74-1 for implementation by the new VNAF Headquarters Quality Assurance Office, operational since 10 March 1975. This office was staffed with six VNAF officers, each of whom was a specialist in his field, i.e., avionics, aircraft maintenance and ammunition/munitions.

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h. Quality Control Program: Trained VNAF personnel completed the development of the Quality Control Program in the Base Support Activity. Quality checks were established for Central Receiving, Inventory, Storage and Base Support.

i. Common item support: Continuous review and coordination with Army Materiel Center (AMC) assured that the common item file was current and permitted consolidation of VNAF common item requirements with other RVN services or agencies.

j. Technical data management: DAO and VNAF personnel completed review of approximately 50,000 initial distribution requirements for Technical Orders/Technical Manuals submitted by ATLC and VNAF air divisions. Technical data were subsequently requisitioned. Receipt/requisitioning actions on all tech/data publications and blank forms were being accomplished within three days. Special emphasis was placed on shipment of safety supplements from ATLC to air divisions on a same-day basis.

k. Munitions: FY75 flying hours and sorties were reduced due to funding constraints. As a result, a munitions stockage objective was developed to establish minimum essential requirements. The stockage objective was calculated on initial FY75 flying hours and included a 60-day surge capability.

## l. Supply and transportation:

(1) Rocket attacks: Attacks at ATLC in the Supply and Transportation (S&T) area occurred on 6 January, 27 January, 11 March, 17 March and 19 March 1975. One warehouse and its contents were completely destroyed; two warehouses sustained partial damage to structures and contents; one security office was destroyed; two administrative offices and a powerplant were damaged.

(2) Project 348: Approximately 80,000 line items destined for Vietnam from CONUS were upgraded to Priority 2. Additional material handling equipment (MHE) and manpower were assigned to this project. VNAF Headquarters provided 27 officers and 97 airmen, and Pacific Air Force (PACAF) provided 17 temporary duty (TDY) United States Air Force (USAF) airmen with supply training and experience to augment the S&T Center staffing at Bien Hoa.

(3) Vehicle parts: Intensive efforts were made in order to control vehicle parts turned over to ATLC S&TC as a result of contractor phase downs. Of the 20,000 line items, 65% were identified by federal stock class and their respective commercial part numbers. Failure of the VNAF to clear rejects by coordinated

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action between S&TC and Materiel Management Center (MMC) resulted in some items not being picked up on the computerized stock records. Progress was hampered due to:

(a) Manpower diverted to assist Project 348.

(b) Shortage of trained VNAF vehicle parts inspectors.

(c) Diversion of inspection manpower to inspect rocket-damaged inventory. DAO appointed a project monitor in late February to work closely with VNAF and the contractor. Negotiations with Lear Siegler Incorporated (LSI) were completed to hire US-trained parts inspectors to augment the VNAF staffing not-to-exceed 120 days. Projected completion date was 31 July 1975.

(4) Storage:

(a) ATLC warehouses 1 and 32 at Bien Hoa Air Base sustained rocket hits through the roofs with damage to structures. Both roofs were repaired, but the basic structures required additional work. ATLC assets were exposed to the weather until the roofs were repaired. Delays were encountered in expediting repairs, since contracts had to be processed through the Thailand Procurement Center. The complete destruction of warehouse 16 and damage to warehouse 40 (also at Bien Hoa) resulted in further shortage of warehouse space. Corrective actions taken included ordering 1,000 bundles of dexion and 4,000 sheets of plywood for shelving purposes. Only the dexion was received and some plywood was borrowed from other activities.

(b) The USAF Rapid Area Distribution Support (RADS) Team identified several S&TC warehouses that were improperly utilized.

(c) Inventory: The ATLC second-cycle inventory was scheduled for completion 30 April 1975. As a result of Project 348 and rocket attack damage, inventory was suspended until S&TC priorities were aligned. As of 31 March 1975, 7,400 items of the projected 140,000 line items had been inventoried.

(d) Packaging and preservation:

1 Items not requiring corrosion treatment: Approximately 1,200 items/units were recovered by recrating after the project began 15 April 1974 to restore items in outside storage. This was a continuous process as weather rapidly eroded containers used for outside storage.

2 Items requiring corrosion treatment: The repackaging and preserving of supplies in outside storage that needed corrosion treatment were deferred pending the arrival of a team from CONUS. This team was tasked to train VNAF specialists in recouping,

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repackaging, recrating and to develop a large-scale repackaging and corrosion-protection program. This TDY team was scheduled to arrive 1 April 1975. Some anticorrosion supplies had been procured and were stockpiled for use at several bases.

3 Several other recouping/repackaging programs were started during this quarter.

a Bases continued large-scale reuse of a wide variety of containers, with large direct-cost savings.

b Checklists were developed and put into use through all VNAF packaging areas.

c VNAF adopted a program to decontaminate all items being packed for shipment.

(e) ATLC central receiving: Receipts and due out releases increased principally due to Project 348. The USAF RADS Team (augmentation personnel for Project 348) recommended procedures be streamlined to clear rejects by increasing coordination between materiel management and the depot. Faster action to clear rejects would put these receipts on the accountable records more rapidly and make them available for issue. VNAF and DAO worked to carry out this recommendation.

m. Redistribution and retrograde of VNAF excess: The Vietnamese Equipment Management Team (VENT) completed the initial Equipment Allowance and Utilization Survey at all VNAF bases. Authorized versus in-use dollar values, allowance source codes and validity of National Stock Numbers (NSN) were all included in the joint VNAF/DAO VENT objectives and were being placed under management and control as excess items. The dollar value of excess Aerospace Ground Equipment (AGE) found was 17.1 million. This excess AGE was identified on all computer data products by the three digit allowance source code of "000." VNAF Headquarters/Logistics assigned an officer to monitor the management and control of excess AGE. Redistribution and retrograde of excesses were managed as follows:

(1) Intrabase transfer: Base Equipment Management Office formally transferred from shops having excess to shops having a void or valid requirement.

(2) Interbase transfer: ATLC and VNAF Headquarters/Logistics initiated redistribution orders to furnish bases having shortages with excesses from other bases.

(3) After completion of above action, remaining excess items were scheduled for shipment to ATLC.

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n. Security Assistance Surveillance Program (SASP): In accordance with Air Force Division Standing Operating Procedure (SOP) 795-1, dated 25 January 1975, End Item Use Inspection (EIUI) was replaced by the Security Assistance Surveillance Program. The Air Force Division did not perform any SASP visits during this quarter because of curtailed TDY funding and the impact of Project 348.

o. Aviation Intensively Managed Items (AIMI): Figures below reflect AIMI negotiated level dollar value versus requisition dollar value for the 3rd quarter. Extenuating circumstances dictated immediate reevaluation of VNAF requirements for nine selected items. Factors contributing to the increased VNAF requirements were Crash Battle Damage (CBD), depot maintenance requirements, rocket damage and intensive fluctuation in flying hours. Army Aviation Support Command (AAVSCOM), St Louis, concurred in renegotiating monthly levels on seven of the nine items. The dollar value of these items is included in the figures below. In addition, a message was forwarded to AAVSCOM, St Louis, on 7 March 1975, furnishing VNAF AIMI requirements for 4th quarter FY75/1st quarter FY76.

	<u>3rd Quarter FY75</u>	<u>4th Quarter FY75</u>
Negotiated Level Dollar Value	\$867,427.96	553,665.43
Requisition Dollar Value	774,940.90	103,041.00

## 8. (C) CONTRACTS.

a. Of significant interest during this reporting period was the assignment of two (2) new contracts for primary administration.

(1) Contract FO4606-75-C-0807, Logistics Management Assistance Team, Inc. (LMAT). This contract called for the LMAT to assist the Cambodian Air Force in organization, facilities, equipment, personnel, supply, training and maintenance during the period 1 January through 30 June 1975. Meetings with contractor and Chief, Military Equipment Delivery Team, Cambodia (CHMEDTC)/Air Force Division, revealed that contractor's performance under this program was excellent, despite increased hostilities.

(2) Contract F62272-75-C-0053, Federal Electric Corporation (FEC). This contract involved the operation and maintenance of one (1) PACAF Tactical Air Navigation facility at Pochentong Air Base, Cambodia, for the period 1 January through 30 June 1975. Due to the increase of flying activities, the contractor was requested by the Administrative Contracting Officer (ACO) to expend his efforts to meet or exceed the established OR rate. As a result, an OR rate of 100% was recorded during the period 1-21 February 1975.

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b. The following contracts were completed during this reporting period:

(1) Order F04606-73-A-0081-0004, CBD repair of two CH-47 aircraft.

(2) Order F04606-73-A-0081-0006, analytical condition inspection and reassembly of four A-37B aircraft.

(3) Order F04606-74-A-0058-0001, CBD of one U-10B aircraft (Air Attache Helio Courier from Phnom Penh).

c. With the completion of various programs for maintenance of VNAF aircraft at Air Vietnam, efforts were being made to move excess materials and equipment to Bien Hoa ATLC. The contractor reported that about 50% of 8000 line items had been transferred to the VNAF. Movement of these assets was slow due to lack of transportation.

d. All contracts were cancelled 30 April 1975.

## 9. (C) CIVIL ENGINEERING.

a. Manning: Personnel assigned to the VNAF Base Civil Engineering (BCE) units closely approximated the authorized strength with a total of 3,460 personnel assigned out of an authorized manning 3,806. Assigned manning was capable of maintaining the nine bases if only routine maintenance was needed. Deterioration of facilities and systems was occurring in spite of the assigned labor force and was attributed to many temporary facilities having passed their useful service life, damage inflicted upon the facilities by hostile action and the work force not being fully utilized due to management and material problems. Additional manning was required to overcome these difficulties and was provided in part by the use of 295 contractor personnel to augment the BCE work force. Most facilities transferred to the VNAF in early 1973 were in need of major maintenance and many were nearing the end of their useful service life. Manning requirements, established to maintain these facilities, were based on routine maintenance needs and consequently were inadequate. Assignment of authorized personnel was limited until early 1974 and personnel assigned were at a minimum skill level. In order to offset these deficiencies, a large contractor labor force was used to train and supplement the VNAF. Rising costs and fund reductions caused this effort to be restricted in early FY74 and further restricted in FY75. All of the above factors detracted from the effectiveness of the Base Civil Engineering organization and caused a general decline of the base facilities. Conditions in mid-74 reached what was considered a low point. The future should have seen a reversal based on the following factors:

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(1) The BCE force was near authorized strength.

(2) Training had been completed in all but two areas - production control and power generation.

(3) Additional trained engineering officers were to be assigned to the staff.

(4) The VNAF was instituting a management system in accordance with VNAF Manual 85-1.

(5) Improvements were being made in the Bulk Construction Material Supply System.

(6) Projects to rehabilitate major systems, using outside contractors, had been or were being accomplished. From this effort, unneeded facilities would have been shut down and consolidation achieved. Scheduled preventive maintenance efforts would have minimized failures of major utility systems and the planning effort should have provided maximum use of resources.

b. Training: Training objectives for BCE personnel were basically completed as of 1 September 1974. From the inception of the program in 1973, more than 3,800 personnel were trained in the basic civil engineering skills. The initial training effort was to instruct the lower level airmen in basic civil engineering skills. Practical training (on-the-job) was being obtained as a side benefit of the augmentation program. Normal work experience continued to expand and broaden the ability of personnel as the Base Civil Engineers were required to maintain the base through their own efforts.

(1) Future training requirements would have been restricted to upgrading assigned personnel by either the use of locally-initiated VNAF programs and/or the Army, Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) Civil Engineer schools. The training of fire department personnel was an item that required continuous attention. Upgrading of the training program was considered satisfactory with training aids and lesson plans which had been translated from English into Vietnamese. Continuous effort on the part of an Air Force fire protection specialist was to be directed to maintain a high degree of efficiency in the VNAF personnel assigned to this field.

(2) Review of all VNAF base fire departments was accomplished with emphasis being placed on training and equipment management.

c. Equipment: Equipment possessed by the VNAF in support of the civil engineering function continued to be a problem. First,

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the distribution of available assets still needed further correction. Much equipment, including commercial air conditioners and portable generators, was deadlined due to lack of parts. Parts breakdown for the commercial equipment was required for requisitioning repair-parts. An effort to review the BCE bench stock had been initiated with the assistance of the Air Force Division civil engineering materiel control specialists and VNAF Headquarters civil engineering personnel. A minimum amount of essential bench stock was to be obtained based on the review. The most serious equipment problem continued to be the need for new, and easier to maintain, fire fighting equipment. DAO AF Division fire department had designed a simplified fire fighting unit using a five-ton cargo M-series vehicle. The design was completed and the plans and specifications had been presented to VNAF for action. Major problems with air conditioning equipment at the Precision Measuring Equipment Laboratory (PMEL) and computer buildings at ATLC (Bien Hoa) had been resolved and an air conditioning service contract initiated. The success of this effort was to be closely evaluated and considered for activation at other bases.

10. (C) SUMMARY. The VNAF had an adequate force structure to support the ARVN in tactical airpower with one exception - photo reconnaissance. As the tempo of fighting increased in January 1975, the VNAF lost 16 aircraft of which 14 were to enemy defenses. This was the highest monthly combat loss rate since the cease-fire. SAM/AAA defenses in many areas of South Vietnam approached those experienced by US aircrews over North Vietnam during "LINEBACKER" operations. Fighter aircraft were deployed from MR's where activity was less intense to more critical areas, and flying programs were adjusted to allocate more hours to areas of increased activity, capitalizing on flexibility of airpower.

a. In February 1975, enemy AAA continued to weaken the VNAF. There were eight combat losses during the month and two operational losses. By 15 March 1975, the VNAF fighter sortie rate doubled and they sustained a sortie rate of 1.25 for the remainder of the month. When higher authority directed the withdrawal of forces from the central highlands, the VNAF began retrograde operations from Pleiku Air Base. They were only successful in evacuating flyable aircraft, the BOBS and some dependents before crowds overran the airfield and prevented the further withdrawal of supplies and equipment. Following the evacuation of Pleiku, the VNAF reorganized its force in MR 2. Phan Rang became the headquarters for the 6th Air Div, and Phu Cat units joined the 2nd Air Div at Nha Trang.

b. Representatives from DAO urged the VNAF staff to evacuate all aircraft from Da Nang on the afternoon of 28 March 1975. Nearly 200 aircraft were left on the ground. Aircrews could not be found to fly because they were trying to evacuate their dependents. The evacuation was further impeded by refugees overrunning the airfield and closing the runway.

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c. With the fall of Da Nang on 29 March 1975, the situation in MR 2 deteriorated at a very rapid pace with Phu Cat being the next loss. Some supplies, including munitions, were evacuated from Phu Cat, but aircraft were left behind, many of which were OR. No aircrews were available because they evacuated with their families in transport aircraft.

d. From this point on, the Air Force Division was unable to accurately track VNAF operations due to an almost total breakdown in their reporting system.

e. The loss of Nha Trang and Phan Rang followed in rapid succession and once again many flyable aircraft, spares and munitions were abandoned. Following the loss of Phan Rang, Bien Hoa was hit daily with artillery and rocket fire. This action made Bien Hoa useless by mid-April 1975, at which time the VNAF moved most of its flyable aircraft to Tan Son Nhut, Binh Thuy and other locations in MR 4. In late March 1975, the VNAF recognized the vulnerability of Bien Hoa and started to move spares, equipment and vehicles to Tan Son Nhut. In the final days of April 1975, the VNAF agreed to retrograde engines and CBD aircraft out of country, but only a few badly damaged airframes were moved.

f. The loss of Pleiku and subsequent bases failed to generate a sense of urgency throughout the VNAF. The ATLC at Bien Hoa continued to operate on a normal five and a half day work week with VNAF Headquarters explaining that only higher civilian authority could specify an extended work period. The activity in some support areas was observed to decline, particularly as the drawdown in contractor and DAO personnel commenced. This latter comment should not be construed as indicating a complete breakdown in VNAF logistic systems. That this did not occur is evidenced by the high sortie rate maintained until the very end.

g. Special recognition should be given to the C-130 program and the operation of the aerial port at Tan Son Nhut. The C-130 proved to be their most effective and versatile weapons system. Although hampered by NORS problems and fuel leaks, this fleet provided exceptional support in the movement of personnel, supplies and as a tactical bomber. The effectiveness of its use as a bomber could never be evaluated due to a lack of bomb damage assessment. Its use did significantly boost the morale of the VNAF, especially when they dropped the BLU-82 in support of the ARVN at Xuan Loc. The aerial port operation at Tan Son Nhut was the most self-sufficient organization in the entire VNAF. Its operation was highly efficient and professional up to and including the US and refugee evacuation.

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h. It should be noted that there was never a known concerted effort by the VNAF to destroy any aircraft, supplies or facilities at any of the installations lost in the final weeks with the exception of Bien Hoa, which in the final days they planned to destroy. This action may have occurred on the night of 28 April 1975, but cannot be confirmed.

6-32

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## CHAPTER 7

### VIETNAMESE NAVY (VNN)

1. (C) LOGISTICS.

a. VNN Ships and Craft. A total of 145 VNN ships and craft were lost in the Da Nang area during the early stages of the North Vietnamese offensive. Most of them were abandoned as forces moved south to Cam Ranh. The subsequent surrender of South Vietnam entailed the loss of all VNN ships and craft, except those listed below which were used by VNN personnel and refugees to leave the country. The latest available VNN report of ships and craft, prepared in December 1974, reflected a total of 1,618 operative vessels, 207 awaiting repair or inoperative and 141 overhaul. As of 20 May 1975, the following 36 vessels were reported to have escaped from Vietnam:

Destroyer Escort Radar Picket (DER)	1
High Endurance Cutter (WHEC)	6
Patrol Craft Escort (PCE)	5
Landing Ship Medium (LSM)	3
Landing Ship Tank (LST)	3
Auxiliary General Purpose (AGP)	2
Landing Craft Repair Ship (ARL)	1
Patrol Gunboat Motor (PGM)	2
Yard Oiler (YOG)	2
Landing Ship Infantry Light (LSIL)	3
Landing Ship Support Large (LSSL)	4
Patrol Craft Fast (PCF)	1
Landing Craft Mechanized (LCM-8)	3
TOTAL	36

In addition to the foregoing, five ships (1 YOG, 1 LSM, 1 WPB, and 2 PGM) were scuttled, and the PGM 602 returned to Saigon.

b. VNN Material. The total value of VNN material lost in March and April 1975 is estimated at \$121,595,583. Following is a breakdown of the losses:

Primary items (e.g., tactical support vehicles, material handling equipment, weapons, communications equipment).	\$68,255,128
Secondary items (spare parts supply items).	\$33,065,763
POL	\$959,763
Ammunition (navy peculiar)	\$19,314,763
Total	\$121,595,583

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c. VNN Supply Center. Based on financial decisions made earlier in the year, the VNN Supply Center was able to provide its customers with essential spare parts and consumables during this period without having to "eat down" on existing stocks. Supply effectiveness was maintained, reaching 81% gross and 88% net by the end of March 1975. This high availability rate made it possible to reduce the safety level for selective inventory management stocks in March from four months to three months, thereby generating \$500,000 in savings. Quality control reports throughout the period indicated there was no degradation of supply support to the VNN.

d. VNN Shipyard. During March and April, the overhaul and repair of LST/LSM type ships were getting highest priority in the workload of the shipyard. Only two of the 16 lift type ships, an LST and an LSM, which were in regular overhaul, were not in use for the evacuation of Da Nang, Qui Nhon and Nha Trang. During this critical period, no regular overhauls were commenced and only those repairs necessary to maintain the ships in an operationally ready status were undertaken.

## 2. (C) OPERATIONS.

### a. Coastal Surveillance System.

(1) During the month of January, the VNN reported boarding 38,390 craft. As a matter of interest, 37,099 were stopped and inspected in February and 37,402 in March. Of those craft boarded in January, 575 people were detained for various reasons on 144 craft. One hundred and sixty-one craft and 717 people were detained in February and 175 craft with 645 persons in March.

(2) The readiness rate of the coastal radar sites, as reported by VNN Sea Operations Command, was 83.18% for the month of January, as compared with 92.53% for February, and 88.49% for the month of March. There were an average of 2.1 radars down per day for the month of January and one for February. In January, there were a total of 2,953 contacts detected compared with 1,919 in February, and 2,434 in March. Of the 2,953 contacts detected in January, 2,208 were tracked, 1,904 of 1,919 in February and 2,417 of 2,434 in March. A total of 49 Filter King exercises were conducted by the coastal zone commanders in March to test the radar system, 40 of which were considered satisfactory for an 81.6% detection rate. The detection rate for the month of February was 57.7% and 62.26% in January.

### b. Combat Operations.

(1) The second phase of the scheduled stand down of VNN operational riverine units, which was implemented in December 1974 and dictated by the cuts in the Defense Assistance, Vietnam (DAV), forced a substantial decline in the primary combat role of the VNN in the war and resulted in ominously increased enemy freedom of movement

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throughout the delta, particularly in the northwestern, western and southern portions of Military Region (MR) 4. These reductions caused the elimination or substantial reduction of VNN presence on important enemy lines of communications like the Vinh Te Canal running along the Vietnamese-Cambodian border from the Hau Giang river almost to the coast in the northwestern portion of MR 4, the Tu Ha Tien Canal along the northwestern border of MR 4 and the Cai Lon river running from the western coast of MR 4 into the delta.

(2) The reduction to 23 of the total 44 operational riverine units caused the combat capability of the riverine forces to decline below that level required to meet the VNN operational commitments in the delta. By reprogramming, funds were made available and five additional divisions were returned to a fully-operational status, bringing the overall total to 28. It was felt that this would give the VNN the minimum number required to meet its operational commitments.

(3) Throughout the period, a continuing sharp upsurge was seen in enemy initiatives, with dramatic increases in fire fights and attacks by fire. This activity included increased daytime attacks on patrolling river craft, a relatively large number of mining incidents and frequent attacks on VNN installations such as the Tuyen Nhon Naval Base on the Vam Co Tay river in northern MR 4 and the Kien An Naval Base near the Cai Lon river in Kien An District. In February, six VNN personnel casualties resulted when a helicopter was shot down by enemy ground fire just west of the Dong Tam Naval Base. During the month of March, VNN units were involved in 35 fire fights, 26 attacks by fire and 3 mining attacks against naval craft. These actions resulted in 15 VNN personnel killed in action (KIA) and 37 wounded in action (WIA). Three craft were sunk and 16 others received varying degrees of damage.

(4) In late December, the Khmer Rouge finally succeeded in closing the Mekong river, the lifeline of the Khmer Republic (Cambodia). This precluded sailing any convoys from Vung Tau to the Khmer capital of Phnom Penh. The interdiction was accomplished by successfully controlling the riverbanks, particularly at major choke points and by effective use of mines and river barriers. A total of six Khmer Navy river craft, that had escorted the last downriver convoy from Phnom Penh to the Khmer/Vietnamese border, were unable to return north and were forced to remain at the Vietnamese Naval Operating Base at Tan Chau. The Khmer Government forces were never able to resecure the banks and no more convoys were attempted.

c. Naval Gunfire Support (NGFS). The Vietnamese Navy continued to provide relatively light gunfire support throughout the period, with only 13 calls for fire during March. These NGFS missions were

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at the following locations: Quang Tri, Qui Nhon, Tam Quan, Phan Thiet, Ham Tan, Phu Quoc and Hon Tre. They were requested by the I Corps Commander and various ARVN field forces, territorial forces and VNN shore installations in Binh Dinh Province, Binh Tuy Province, Phuoc Tuy Province and Phu Quoc District. The missions were assigned to HQ's 07, 17, 16, 15, 11, 02, 612, 230 and 605, with rounds expended as follows:

<u>TYPE</u>	<u>NUMBER RDS</u>
5"	122
3"	181
81mm	20
40mm	60

d. Miscellaneous.

(1) The 14 March 1975 decision to withdraw completely from the highlands, which resulted in the large-scale evacuation of personnel and subsequent demise of the South Vietnamese Government, coincided with the replacement of the VNN Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), RADM Lam Nguon Tanh by VADM Chung Tan Cang, the former Commander, Capital Military District. VADM Cang, while giving the appearance of a very capable individual, was by his own admission very much out of touch with naval matters and the burden of running the Navy fell more on some of his key staff members.

(2) Shortly after the mass withdrawal from the highlands began, it became readily apparent that a definite enemy threat existed to the coastal areas of MR 1. The initial decision made by the VNN regarding any withdrawal of VNN assets was the evacuation of Coastal Radar Site (CRS) 103 at Nui Hon Vuon and the possible pullout from CRS 303 at Ta Kou. This decision was made during the last week in March, based on the vivid forecast of a fast-developing disastrous situation. By the end of the month, nine of a total of 16 radar sites had been lost, all four in MR 1, all of the four in MR 2 and CRS 303 at Ta Kou. The remaining sites were operating but the efficacy of the seaward-looking radar system was being reevaluated. In the evacuation of sites 103 and 104, the VNN had retrieved the electronics equipment, the radar antennas and as much useful gear as possible, and all was returned to LSB Da Nang. Unfortunately, none of the equipment ever left Da Nang.

(3) It also became apparent that all available sealift forces would be required, both to move troops and refugees and for back-haul of material and ammunition. The VNN committed every asset available, including LST 501, which departed Saigon with one engine inoperative and with shipyard personnel embarked. One LST remained in the shipyard because it was at that point in its normal overhaul

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which made it impracticable to restore the ship to an operationally-ready status. During this preevacuation phase of the operation, thousands of refugees, both military and civilian, were transported from MR's 1 and 2, south to Cam Ranh Bay and later to Vung Tau and Phu Quoc Island. After the fall of Hue, Tan My and the city of Da Nang, the entire refugee situation deteriorated to a tragedy in magnitude beyond comprehension. Every ship was loaded far beyond its normal capacity, with decks and holds filled to the maximum. Some LST's carried up to 7500, WHEC's 5000 and PCE's 2000 people. All of the small craft in the area were stationed along the coast, as close inshore as possible, to pick up those who were able to make their way to the beach.

(4) After the fall of Hue, an immediate threat to Da Nang existed. The Navy had located a Logistic Support Base, Coastal Surveillance Center, Harbor Entrance Control Point, Coastal Radar Site, Harbor Defense Unit and elements of three Coastal Groups at Da Nang in addition to the Naval Base. Positive direction from the Joint General Staff (JGS), by this time, was sadly lacking and became, at best, very vague. The VNN was unable to obtain from the JGS any decision regarding an intention to stand at Da Nang or to withdraw south. Contingency plans were formulated for removal of items of installed equipment, floating cranes, a synchrolift and secondary items of support and ammunition. The coastal enclaves, however, were overrun with such rapidity that neither removal nor destruction was accomplished, since total confusion reigned and all semblance of order ceased. At Da Nang, many small boats were used to transport persons to larger ships waiting offshore. These craft were largely abandoned, resulting in a total loss of 145 craft as shown below:

(a) <u>TYPE</u>	<u>NUMBERS</u>
Monitors	2
Patrol Boat River (PBR)	37
Landing Craft Mechanized (LCM-6)	10
Minesweeper Medium (MSM)	3
Patrol Craft Fast (PCF)	6
Ferro cement coastal raider	13
Yabuta junks	19
Command junks	10
Patrol Boat (WPB)	2
Refueler	1
	<hr/>
	103

The remainder (42) were Skimmers, Vedettes, Stcans and other small craft.

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(b) At LSB Da Nang, the following base craft were lost:

<u>TYPE</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>
Landing Craft Utility (LCU)	2
Utility boat	2
100 ton floating crane	1

(5) Although the initial losses to the VNN in assets alone were very significant, they had no real impact on the VNN fighting capability in the areas remaining under South Vietnamese control. The heart of their logistics base, the naval shipyard and supply center, remained intact. With regard to navy-peculiar ammunition, the totals remained essentially at the 60-day intensive combat rate (ICR) stock objective in their most critical assets and generally were well above this figure. The Navy was also in a very good position with regard to afloat assets. Other than the aforementioned 145 river/coastal craft which were lost, 1 LCU was sunk and another severely damaged at Chu Lai while attempting to extract battered elements of the ARVN 2nd Division and Quang Ngai territorial forces. In addition, a total of eight LCM-6's and LCM-8's were sunk. These losses, however, when considered in the context of their reduced coastline and the number of craft remaining, had minimal impact on the VNN's capability to continue to function.

(6) The VNN essentially directed its own phase of the overall personnel and equipment relocation operation. In addition to providing assets to the Central Logistics Command for use as was deemed necessary, the VNN utilized its own ships and craft to move personnel and a small amount of equipment. This was primarily from Coastal Groups and other locations ahead of the advancing enemy for reinforcing the defense of the vital waterways leading to Saigon. The overall enemy threat, coupled with the almost insurmountable refugee problem and the ever-changing immediate tactical situation, dictated minute-by-minute direction from the Naval Operations Center (NOC) located at the Navy Headquarters in Saigon. This direction came directly from the CNO, VADM Cang, and his key staff members, particularly the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, who is considered the officer most responsible for providing sound decisions and positive direction to the outlying units under nearly impossible conditions. This task was extremely difficult under the pressure of the impending fall of the country and the decided lack of guidance from higher headquarters.

(7) Military activity in the delta remained relatively quiet with a few exceptions such as the Naval Bases at Tuyen Nhon and Kien An, both of which were under almost continual enemy pressure. With the regrouping of assets in the south, protection for the vital lines of communication in the delta remained viable. It was obvious,

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however, that once the enemy consolidated its gains in the north, a concerted effort to choke the lifelines to Saigon would be made in the delta areas of Can Tho and Ben Luc.

(8) Unfortunately, the North Vietnamese drive did not stop in the northern MR's but continued south with the same staggering rapidity until the last few days of April, when the North Vietnamese finally reached the outskirts of Saigon. Throughout this entire time, the Navy made every attempt to react to the immediate situation deploying their combatant and logistic lift ships for gunfire support and refugee evacuation. Until the very end, the VNN seemed less preoccupied with out-of-country relocation of officers and families than the other services and concerned themselves strictly with the task at hand. Additionally, the morale of the VNN appeared higher than that of the other services. Its determination to "fight to the end" can be attributed to the leadership of the CNO and a few senior officers.

(9) During the evening of 29 April, a flotilla of VNN ships departed Saigon for Vung Tau, with a large number of refugees embarked on all ships, and reached international waters early on 30 April. With the departure of the CNO, VADM Cang, and many other senior officers, Captain Nguyen Van Tan, former Director, Navy Security Service, became the last Vietnamese Navy Chief of Naval Operations.

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## CHAPTER 8

### VIETNAMESE MARINE CORPS (VNMCM)

1. (C) GENERAL. In late March, when the withdrawals in Military Region (MR) 1 and 2 were ordered, the Marine Division had approximately 11,000 men in its area of operations (AO) in northern MR 1. The Division was fully equipped, well-trained, well-led, and combat tested. Approximately 4,000 of those men retrograded and disembarked at Vung Tau, in MR 3, on 2 April. An additional 1,500 or so marines rejoined their units in the weeks preceding the surrender; most having escaped by small boat and some having walked from the vicinity of Cam Ranh Bay after disembarking there following the withdrawal from Da Nang. All major unit assets and about half the individual equipment and weapons of those marines able to withdraw and find their way to MR 3 were lost. The 147th Brigade, one of the four brigades of the division, lost over 80% of its personnel during the withdrawal from positions in defense of Hue. Other units experienced their most serious losses during the withdrawal from Da Nang. Most of the marines who were able to get aboard ships did so by swimming. Many marines were drowned in the attempt. Others, who could not swim, were killed or captured by the enemy on the beaches.

2. (C) THE MARINES' WITHDRAWAL. The Marine Commandant, Major General Bui The Lan, discussed the withdrawal with a US Marine officer who worked with MG Lan and his staff during the preceding ten months. MG Lan stressed five military aspects of the withdrawal which, although inseparable from the political aspects, can be described as follows:

a. The division was ordered on 23 March to defend at all cost its positions north of Hue. The positions were held at that time by the 147th Brigade; task-organized with four infantry battalions, one artillery battalion and various support units. Brigade strength was about 3,000 men (other marine units had previously been re-deployed to positions in defense of Da Nang following the removal of the Airborne Division from that area). The 147th Brigade was preparing to execute the order to defend when it was ordered to withdraw. The men had been psychologically prepared to stay and fight. The division was not in contact with the enemy. An adverse effect on morale was inevitable. In retrospect, the withdrawal was a tactical error: almost total personnel and equipment losses were sustained by the 147th Marine Brigade with no attrition of the enemy force.

b. The rear area during the withdrawal from Hue, and later during the operations around Da Nang, was clogged with thousands of armed stragglers from other military units and thousands of civilians. Tactical movement during the withdrawal was impossible.

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c. Other MR 1 ground units dissolved. Part of the national strategy had been to locate most ground forces in their home areas, thus taking advantage of individual motivation to defend home and family. When troops from those units were ordered to withdraw, their homes were forfeited and their families became refugees. Many troops reverted to being individuals rather than members of military units, deserting their units and joining their families as refugees. The Marine Division's troops did not have the same conflicting motivations. Most had been recruited in MR 3. As one of the two strategic reserve divisions, the Marine Division was operating away from the area where its families lived.

d. Coordination between air, ground and naval units in MR 1 was poor.

e. The enemy's tactics, though not new, were effective. They attacked with rockets and artillery against populated areas, then (at Da Nang) with tanks on three axes lightly supported by infantry. Civilian panic and additional military desertions increased difficulty of movement in the rear.

### 3. (C) SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT LOST AND DESTROYED.

a. All major equipment and the individual equipment and weapons of troops who were killed or captured were lost. Nearly half of the individual equipment and weapons of troops who returned were lost.

b. The division was able to destroy about 40% of its ammunition on position, 120 of an estimated 200 cargo trucks, and 60 of 60 artillery pieces. All of the division's 15 TOW anti-tank systems were dumped in the surf, as were most of the crew-served weapons.

c. Factors leading to the loss of the remaining equipment and supplies were:

(1) The unexpected order to withdraw immediately from the Hue defensive positions, precluding adequate planning. At the time the order was given, positions were being improved and resupplied in preparation for defense, not withdrawal. Momentum was in the wrong direction and reorientation of effort required time that was not available.

(2) The physical problem of ships and craft that could not beach or close on a pier or other loading area.

(3) The rapidity of withdrawal.

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(4) The complication of a civilian population mixed with thousands of armed stragglers, making movement and order in the beach areas nearly impossible.

## 4. (C) ACTION TO RESTORE COMBAT EFFECTIVENESS.

a. The remnants of the Marine Division were met at Vung Tau by a resupply convoy sent by the rear headquarters in Saigon containing water, food, medical supplies, and clothing. A second resupply convoy of ammunition, mobile maintenance equipment, additional clothing and individual equipment arrived two days later.

b. The Marine Division was given first priority for re-equipping by the Joint General Staff. Weapons and vehicles started arriving at the end of the first week in April.

c. A brigade of three infantry battalions and one artillery battalion was ready for deployment by 15 April and was committed to defensive positions east of Long Binh between Saigon and Xuan Loc.

d. A second brigade was formed and deployed in the same area approximately ten days later. The effectiveness of the second brigade is questionable because of relatively inexperienced company grade officers and many under-trained recruits in the ranks. (Five battalion commanders and about forty company commanders had been killed in MR 1.) Most recruits were assigned to combat units during the last week of April, many with as little as four weeks of training.

e. The division (minus) was not in hostile contact through mid-April. By the beginning of the last week of April, both brigades were in the vicinity of Long Binh. Division headquarters elements plus a force of about one battalion (minus) were located at Vung Tau. On 27 or 28 April, the division apparently received orders to secure part of National Route (QL) 15 east and south of Long Binh. The last report received by DAO indicated that both brigades were engaged by elements of two NVA divisions near Bear Cat (Long Thanh).

5. (U) EVACUATION. One hundred and eighty-three marine dependents were evacuated by US Air Force C-130 aircraft from Vung Tau on 27 April, with precision and total security. An additional forty-three dependents were among the last evacuees from the DAO compound on 29 April. No marine officers or enlisted men were evacuated prior to the surrender. Subsequent to the surrender some marines, including the Commandant, Major General Lan, made their way to shipping in the vicinity of Vung Tau.

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## CHAPTER 9

### TERRITORIAL FORCES (TF)

1. (C) TERRITORIAL FORCES. These forces consisted of the Regional Forces (RF) and the Popular Forces (PF).

a. This chapter presents a final four month assessment of the Republic of Vietnam Territorial Forces (TF). It points up significant changes and/or modifications in organization, mission, employment, and operational policy. Modest progress was noted during the first two months as the Joint General Staff (JGS) continued its efforts to upgrade and improve TF operational capabilities and performance. These efforts were aimed primarily at the organization, logistical support, and training of the RF Mobile Groups. Improvement of the TF ceased in early March 1975, as North Vietnamese Army (NVA) forces launched the first of the large scale attacks in Military Regions (MR's) 1 and 2 and several sectors of MR 3. These enemy attacks gained momentum during March and April resulting in the roll-back of Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) forces and TF who had to abandon large areas to advancing enemy forces.

b. As the previous quarter ended there was still heavy fighting at Phuoc Binh (Song Be), Phuoc Long Province, with a small force of ARVN and TF gallantly hanging on to a small defensive position inside the city. This last bastion of resistance in Phuoc Long Province finally fell on 6 January 1975, as friendly forces were overrun by a numerically superior enemy force including armor and long-range artillery. With the fall of Phuoc Long Province, five districts, seven subsectors, 19 villages, 66 hamlets, and approximately 39,000 South Vietnamese fell into enemy hands. This proved to be the beginning of the end for the Republic of Vietnam (RVN).

2. (C) REGIONAL FORCES (RF).

a. The RF assigned strength, reported by the JGS on 28 February 1975, was approximately 283,000 men, a reduction of 6,000 since November 1974, due primarily to a number of units being deactivated (Figure 9-1). The JGS sources stated a strength report for March 1975 would not be published because of the enemy offensive, the loss of MR 1 and most of MR 2 (up to that time), and the subsequent inability to account for ARVN and RF/PF forces from or in those areas. The last and most current strength and unit status was extracted from the Territorial Forces Activity Reporting System (TFARS) for February 1975 (Figure 9-2). It is included primarily for historical purposes as representing the last strength accountability prior to the offensive which commenced 9 March 1975 at Ban Me Thuot.

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b. Prior to the final enemy offensive, significant progress was being made toward reorganizing and upgrading the Regional Forces. Briefly, the following depicts some of the major changes noted during the first quarter of CY 75:

(1) The RF Mobile Group (RF MG) reorganization was completed during February 1975 with the addition of three RF MG (two in MR 2 and one in MR 3), increasing the total from 41 to 44 (Figure 9-3 and 9-4). Had it not been for the offensive, and the sudden turn of events that followed, the RF MG program would have been successfully completed on or about 30 April 1975 with all groups and supporting Territorial Artillery (TA) batteries deployed to their assigned areas of operations (AO). Instead of a completed program, final surrender and defeat occurred on 30 April 1975. The RF MG Order of Battle consisted of 44 RF MG consisting of three RF mobile battalions (total 132 RF battalions), and 44 TA batteries (one for each group totaling 88 TA platoons), and a proposed authorized strength of over 38,000 officers and men. An RF MG authorized strength was 1,947 men. The RF mobile battalions were authorized 556 men assigned to four 118 man companies. The balance of strength was assigned to command, staff, and support elements of the group or battalion.

(2) The RF operational policy underwent a major change in late January 1975, when the JGS directed the complete reorganization of the TF command and control from top to bottom, with an implementation date of 1 February 1975. The most significant change occurred at the sector level with a complete reorganization of the sector command. Ostensibly, the deputy sector commander slot was abolished, and the chief of staff/sector concurrently became the commander of TF which, according to JGS sources, raised eyebrows among field commanders. In anticipation of this anxiety, JGS revised the table of organization and equipment (TOE) to increase the rank of the chief of staff from lieutenant colonel to colonel. In most instances the former deputy commanders were assigned as the chief of staff/sector, with the former chiefs of staff assigned to one of the two deputy chief of staff positions created by this change. (Figure 9-5). The assignment of the chief of staff/sector as the commander of TF was challenged by most of the 44 sector commanders; however, JGS felt it did not violate the principles of command and control. It was judged by the central government that the assignment of a full-time TF commander to carry out the day-to-day housekeeping functions would free the sector commander to exercise his command responsibilities more effectively and efficiently and to oversee RF/PF operations as well as political and administrative responsibilities. (Figure 9-6).

(3) During the months of January and February 1975, JGS deactivated 22 RF battalions, eight separate RF companies, and 76 PF platoons; all in MR 4. The unused spaces were returned to JGS/J3

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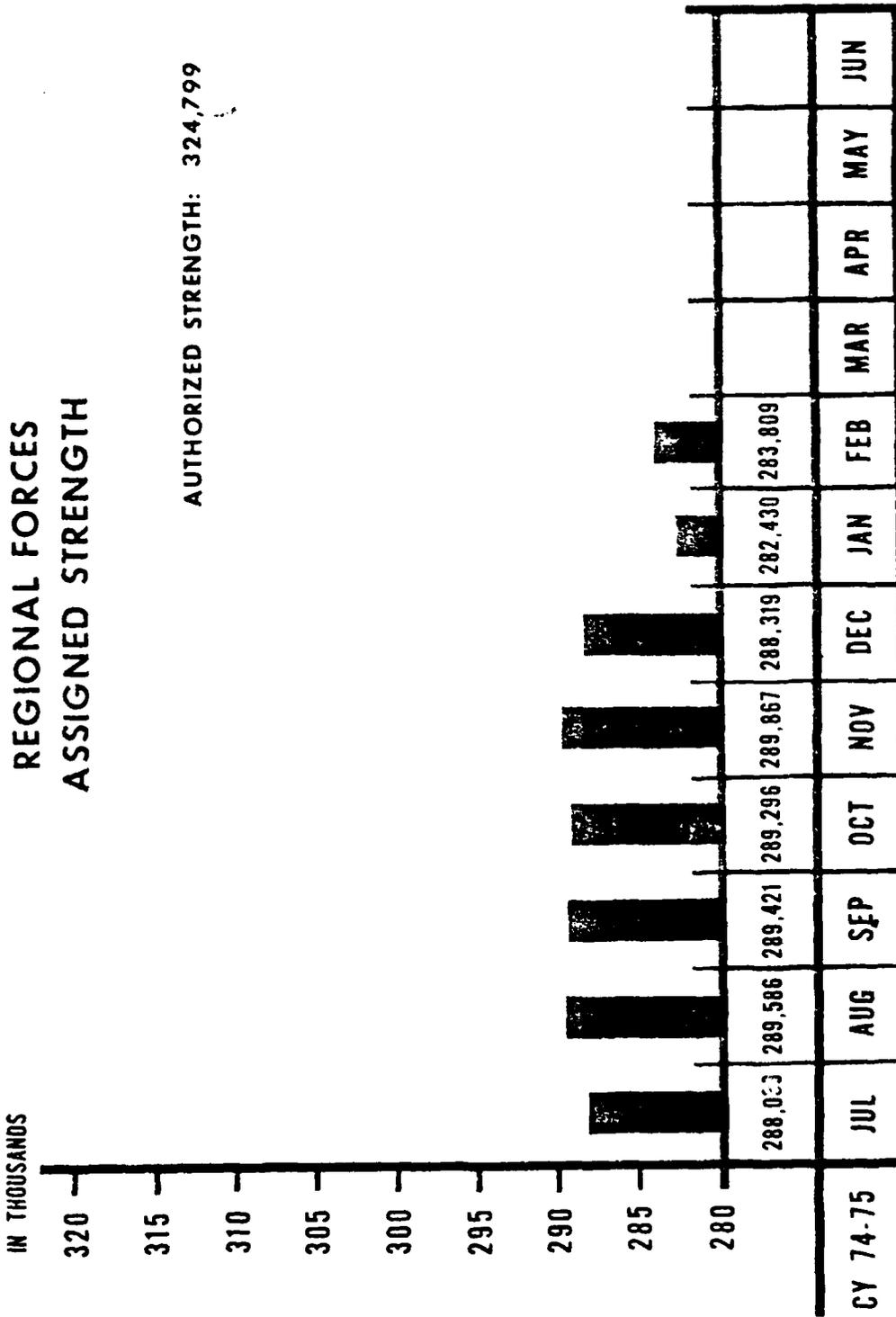


Figure 9-1

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**POPULAR FORCES  
ASSIGNED STRENGTH  
CY 1974**

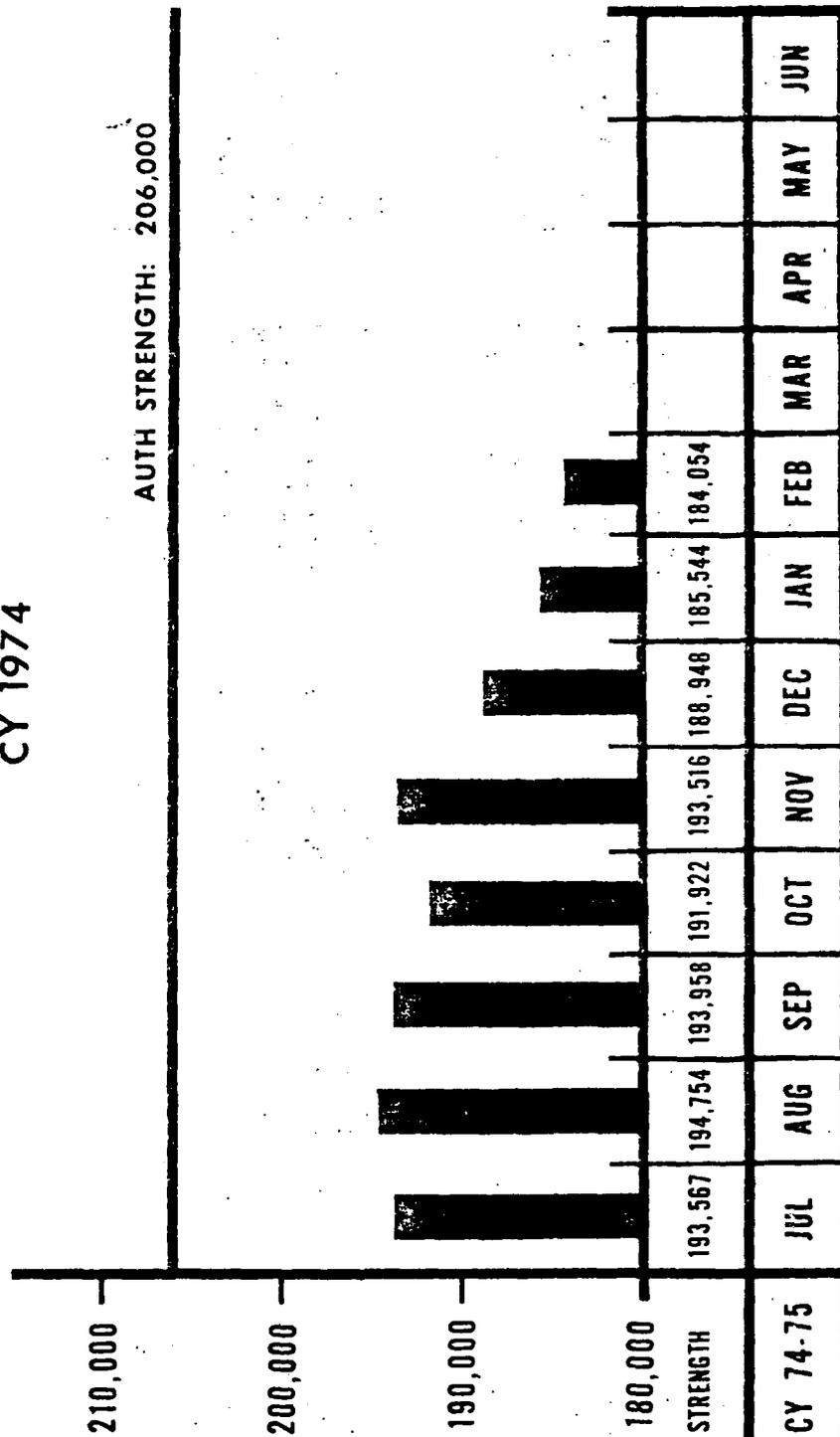


Figure 9-2

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DESIGNATION, ASSIGNMENT AND LOCATION OF RF MOBILE GROUPS  
AND 105MM HOWITZER BATTERIES  
EFFECTIVE DATE: 28 FEBRUARY 1975

DESIGNATION OF GROUP	PREVIOUS DESIGNATION	SECTOR/PROVINCE ASSIGNMENT	DESIGNATION OF TA 105MM HOW BATTERIES	PREVIOUS DESIGNATION
<u>MR 1</u>				
911st RF MG	101-143-144 RF Bn	HQ, Quang Nam	105mm How Btry 911	105-106 TA Plt
912d RF MG	225-136-142 RF Bn	HQ, Quang Ngai	105mm How Btry 912	109-110 TA Plt
913d RF MG	105-110-119 RF Bn	HQ, Quang Tri	105mm How Btry 913	113-114 TA Plt
914th RF MG	107-111-128 RF Bn	HQ, Thua Thien	105mm How Btry 914	103-120 TA Plt
915th RF MG	104-108-149 RF Bn	HQ, Quang Nam	105mm How Btry 915	107-108 TA Plt
916th RF MG	115-116-135 RF Bn	HQ, Quang Tin	105mm How Btry 916	115-116 TA Plt
917th RF MG	139-141-137 RF Bn	HQ, Quang Ngai	105mm How Btry 917	111-112 TA Plt
<u>MR 2</u>				
* 920th RF MG	207-201-233 RF Bn	HQ, Phu Bon	105mm How Btry 920	227-228 TA Plt
921st RF MG	234-215-216 RF Bn	HQ, Binh Dinh	105mm How Btry 921	251-252 TA Plt
922d RF MG	245-246-272 RF Bn	HQ, Khanh Hoa	105mm How Btry 922	258-259 TA Plt
923d RF MG	278-240-213 RF Bn	HQ, Pleiku	105mm How Btry 923	213-214 TA Plt
924th RF MG	268-219-206 RF Bn	HQ, Phu Yen	105mm How Btry 924	203-256 TA Plt
925th RF MG	212-229-248 RF Bn	HQ, Binh Thuan	105mm How Btry 925	220-222 TA Plt
926th RF MG	211-224-225 RF Bn	HQ, Darlac	105mm How Btry 926	246-247 TA Plt
927th RF MG	217-218-208 RF Bn	HQ, Binh Dinh	105mm How Btry 927	249-250 TA Plt
928th RF MG	251-252-281 RF Bn	HQ, Kontum	105mm How Btry 928	233-234 TA Plt
* 929th RF MG	221-276-238 RF Bn	HQ, Lam Dong	105mm How Btry 929	202-254 TA Plt
<u>MR 3</u>				
931st RF MG	369-380-382 RF Bn	HQ, Gia Dinh	105mm How Btry 931	340-341 TA Plt
932d RF MG	330-331-332 RF Bn	HQ, Long An	105mm How Btry 932	309-311 TA Plt
933d RF MG	346-347-376 RF Bn	HQ, Bien Hoa	105mm How Btry 933	312-313 TA Plt

Figure 9-3A

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MR 3 Cont'd

934th RF MG	304-312-313	RF Bn	HQ, Tay Ninh	105mm How Btry	934	303-338	TA Plt
935th RF MG	306-322-360	RF Bn	HQ, Binh Duong	105mm How Btry	935	316-319	TA Plt
936th RF MG	324-342-343	RF Bn	HQ, Long Khanh	105mm How Btry	936	335-337	TA Plt
937th RF MG	305-319-328	RF Bn	HQ, Mau Nghia	105mm How Btry	937	305-306	TA Plt
938th RF MG	302-325-355	RF Bn	HQ, Phuoc Tuy	105mm How Btry	938	327-329	TA Plt
* 939th RF MG	357-327-328	RF Bn	HQ, Gia Dinh	105mm How Btry	939	341-342	TA Plt

MR 4

941st RF MG	519-464-466	RF Bn	HQ, Vinh Long	105mm How Btry	941	449-450	TA Plt
942d RF MG	440-442-435	RF Bn	HQ, Sa Dec	105mm How Btry	942	452-453	TA Plt
943d RF MG	515-434-433	RF Bn	HQ, Go Cong	105mm How Btry	943	439-437	TA Plt
944th RF MG	453-415-454	RF Bn	HQ, Kien Hoa	105mm How Btry	944	435-441	TA Plt
945th RF MG	475-479-416	RF Bn	HQ, Phong Dinh	105mm How Btry	945	416-413	TA Plt
946th RF MG	421-439-456	RF Bn	HQ, An Giang	105mm How Btry	946	456-462	TA Plt
947th RF MG	494-448-541	RF Bn	HQ, Chau Doc	105mm How Btry	947	421-424	TA Plt
948th RF MG	513-516-450	RF Bn	HQ, Dinh Tuong	105mm How Btry	948	440-432	TA Plt
949th RF MG	436-542-499	RF Bn	HQ, Kien Phong	105mm How Btry	949	463-425	TA Plt
950th RF MG	523-524-470	RF Bn	HQ, Vinh Binh	105mm How Btry	950	444-446	TA Plt
951st RF MG	521-465-444	RF Bn	HQ, Vinh Long	105mm How Btry	951	449-450	TA Plt
952d RF MG	528-529-426	RF Bn	HQ, Kien Giang	105mm How Btry	952	458-411	TA Plt
953d RF MG	408-483-486	RF Bn	HQ, Ba Xuyen	105mm How Btry	953	408-409	TA Plt
954th RF MG	437-457-518	RF Bn	HQ, An Giang	105mm How Btry	954	454-455	TA Plt
955th RF MG	425-538-540	RF Bn	HQ, Chau Doc	105mm How Btry	955	423-422	TA Plt
956th RF MG	451-507-509	RF Bn	HQ, Kien Hoa	105mm How Btry	956	436-434	TA Plt
957th RF MG	441-459-460	RF Bn	HQ, Sa Dec	105mm How Btry	957	415-451	TA Plt
958th RF MG	420-462-514	RF Bn	HQ, Go Cong	105mm How Btry	958	438-431	TA Plt

\*These three RF MGs were organized and trained during the first quarter CY 75.

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PROGRESS IN ORGANIZATION OF THE RF MOBILE GROUP  
 CONCEPT AS OF 28 FEBRUARY 1975

MRs	PHASE						TOTAL	
	PHASE 1		PHASE 2		PHASE 3		AUTH	ASGD
	AUTH	ASGD	AUTH	ASGD	AUTH	ASGD (1)		
1	2	2	5	5	0	0	7	7
2	4	4	4	4	2	2	10	10
3	0	0	8	8	1	1	9	9
4	12	12	6	6	0	0	18	18
TOTAL	18	18	23	23	3	3	44	44

NOTE: (1) Assigned on 1 February 1975.

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Operations. It was speculated, but not fully confirmed, that many of the soldiers from the deactivated RF battalions were assigned as replacements to the three ARVN divisions in MR 4. The rest of the soldiers were assigned to understrength RF units (including personnel from the deactivated PF platoons).

c. The subsector program, conceived by the GVN one year ago, was totally abandoned in MR's 1 and 2. With the massive evacuation of MR 1, 363 sub-subsectors were lost to enemy forces and out of a total of 553 in MR 2, approximately 65% were abandoned as of 31 March 1975. JGS reported that, prior to the NVA offensive, the GVN had under its control 19,334,909 South Vietnamese, while the enemy had over 427,000. MR 1 had a population of 3,273,000 under GVN control, while the enemy had 95,000 Vietnamese under control as of 28 February 1975. The staggering fact is that only a small percentage of the population initially escaped from the communists. Figure 9-7 depicts the population breakout by province and MR and represents the most current final population distribution figures available. The JGS/J3 stated that a March 1975 report would not be published because of the enormous task involved in accounting for everyone lost or subsequently recovered during the period.

d. During January and February 1975, enemy forces initiated a total of 6,756 incidents against the TF inflicting a total of 6,952 combat casualties, of which 1,370 were killed in action (KIA). A total of 1,922 individual and crew-served weapons were lost during this period. Enemy losses were 3,519, of which 3,172 were KIA. Friendly forces captured a total of 1,655 individual and crew-served weapons from the enemy during the same period. This represents the last accurate accounting of TF activities available to DAO from JGS/RVNAF.

### 3. (C) POPULAR FORCES (PF).

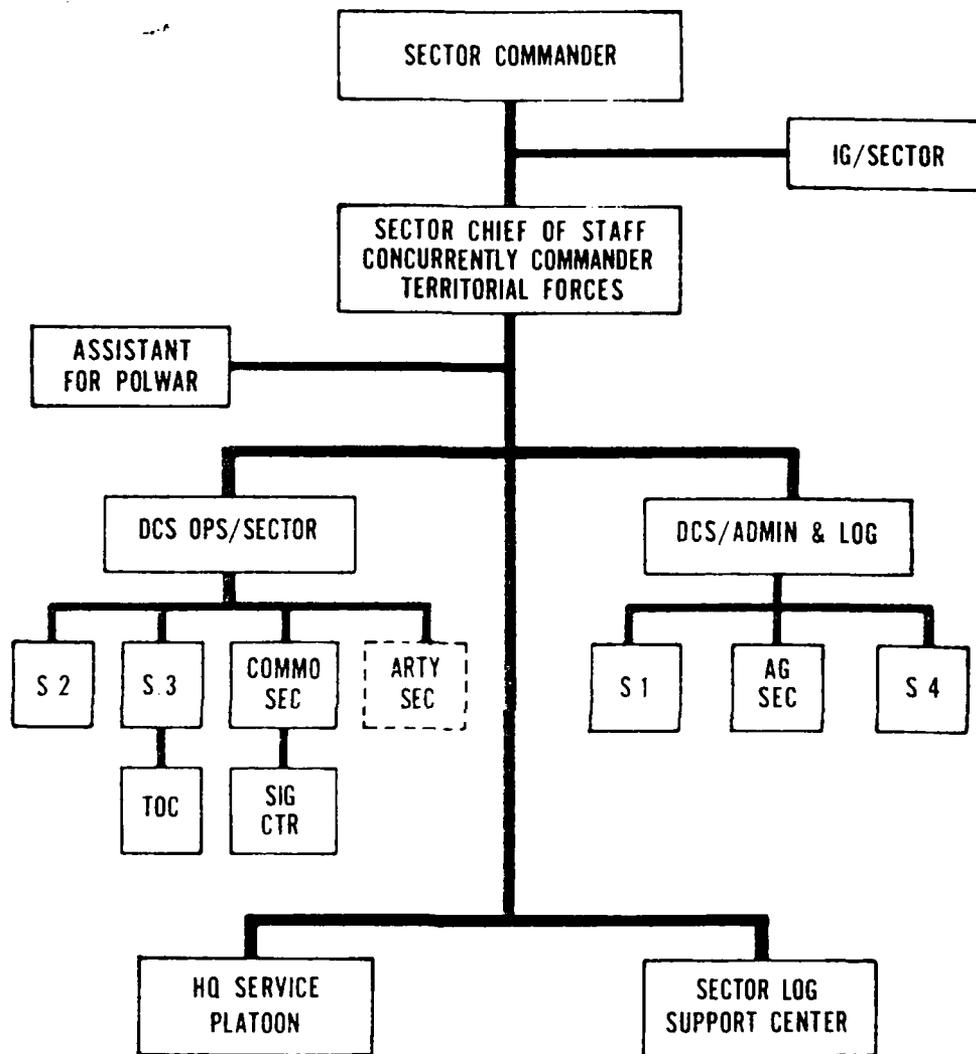
a. The situation that confronted the RF had an equal effect on the PF during the period. PF strength, as reported on 28 February 1975, was over 184,000, reflecting a reduction of more than 9,000 (Figure 9-2). This reduction in strength was largely due to the deactivation of 76 29-man platoons, increased desertions, a significant increase in combat casualties and the transfer of a number of PF to the RF in MR 4.

b. Up to the time of the enemy offensive, more than one-third of the PF operational strength continued to man and maintain approximately 4,000 various size outposts throughout the country. Approximately 1,600 of these outposts were located in MR's 1 and 2, and were abandoned to enemy forces during the initial month of the offensive.

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**ORGANIZATION OF THE SECTOR HQ**



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Figure 9-5

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## CHAIN OF COMMAND OF TERRITORIAL FORCES

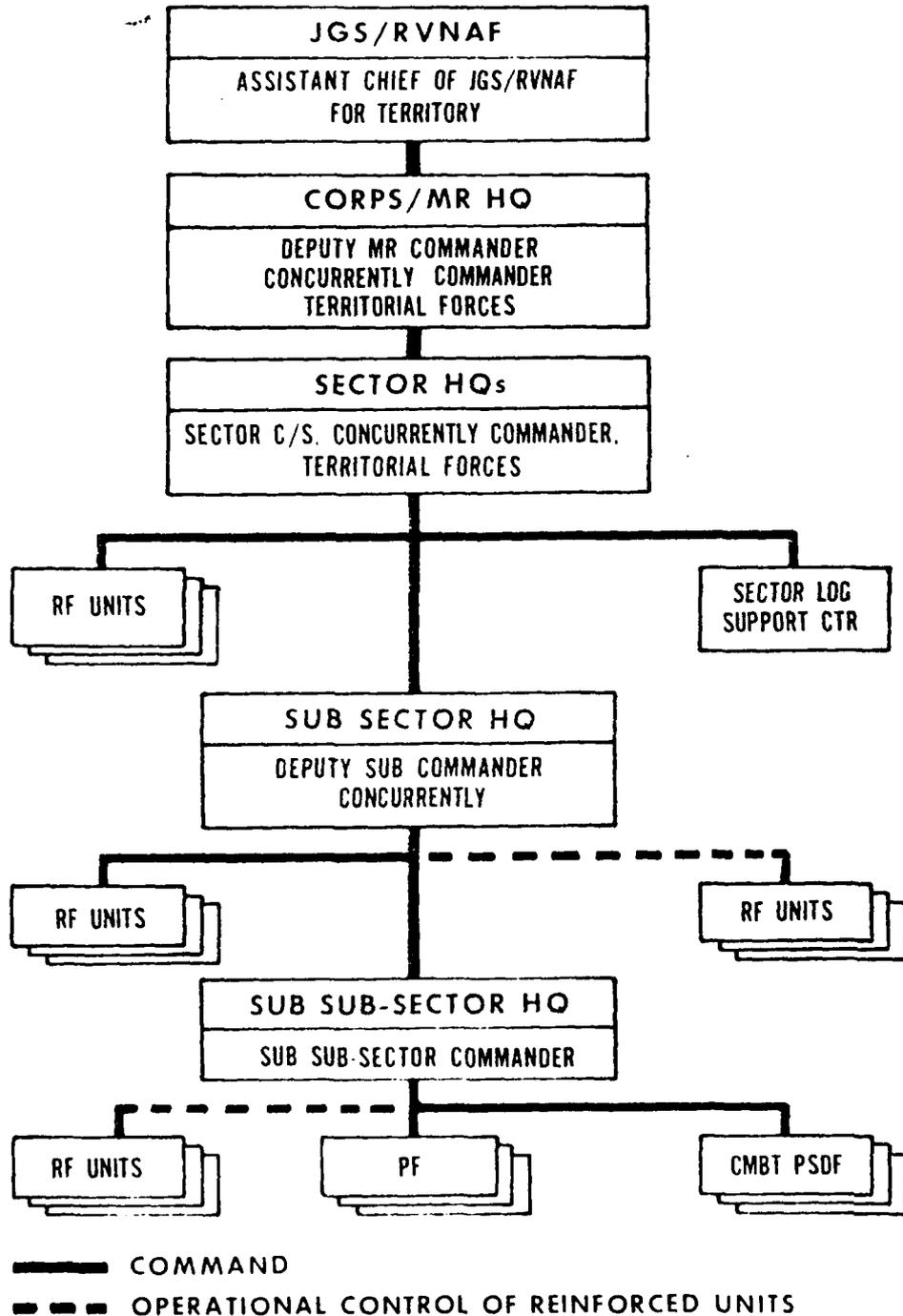


Figure 9-6

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c. For historical information, there were 1,152 PF platoons and a TFARS assigned strength of 33,669 reported in MR 1 for February 1975; MR 2 had 1,575 PF platoons and a TFARS assigned strength of 43,757. Official JGS sources stated that, as of 31 March 1975, no PF soldiers had been accounted for from MR 1 and those areas of MR 2 which had been abandoned.

TERRITORIAL SECURITY SITUATION MARCH 1975  
MR 1

Sector	Number			Population		
	Sub-Sector	Village	Hamlet	A, B&C (1)	D & E (1)	NVA & VC
Quang Tri	7	119	521	160,000	43,000	30,000
Thua Thien	10	99	487	574,000	19,000	(3)
Hue	(2)	10	33	214,000	0	(3)
Quang Nam	9	168	360	466,000	80,000	26,000
Danang	(2)	19	113	477,000	0	(3)
Quang Tin	6	111	269	391,000	40,000	3,000
Quang Ngai	10	206	407	544,000	262,000	36,000
TOTAL	42	732	2,190	2,826,000	444,000	95,000

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(1) GVN defined hamlet security by letter as follows:

- A) Security fully established, effective local government.
- B) -GVN has military and administrative control, VC harass outside of hamlet
- C) Hamlet is insecure, VC cadre are active, GVN maintains some presence.
- D) Autonomous municipalities.
- E) No current information available

Figure 9-7A

9-16  
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TERRITORIAL SECURITY SITUATION MARCH 1975  
MR 2

Sector	Sub-Sector	Number			Population			NVA & VC
		Sub-sub-Sector	Village	Hamlet	A, B, & C (1) D & E (1)	Hamlets	Total	
Kontum	4	22	143	310	69,000	11,000	80,000	25,000
Binh Dinh	9	85	179	755	612,000	103,000	715,000	50,000
Pleiku	3	72	141	468	206,000	4,000	210,000	31,000
Phu Bon	3	31	56	142	85,000	1,000	86,000	(3)
Phu Yen	6	66	66	235	345,000	9,000	353,000	(3)
Darlac	4	48	69	358	272,000	2,000	274,000	(3)
Khanh Hoa	6	59	81	251	247,000	1,000	248,000	(3)
Ninh Thuan	5	29	31	129	236,000	0	236,000	(3)
Tuyen Duc	3	24	38	110	121,000	0	121,000	(3)
Quang Duc	4	12	23	55	37,000	1,000	38,000	(3)
Lam Dong	3	24	35	88	108,000	5,000	113,000	(3)
Binh Thuan	7	53	62	177	329,000	4,000	333,000	(3)
Nha Trang	(2)	11	11	62	221,000	0	221,000	(3)
Qui Nhon	(2)	16	16	50	215,000	0	215,000	(3)
Cam Ranh	(2)	12	12	44	133,000	0	133,000	(3)
Da Lat	(2)	9	9	30	105,000	0	105,000	(3)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>573</b>	<b>972</b>	<b>3,264</b>	<b>3,341,000</b>	<b>141,000</b>	<b>3,481,000</b>	<b>106,000</b>

- (1) Same as Figure 9-7A
- (2) Same as Figure 9-7A
- (3) Same as Figure 9-7A

Figure 9-7B

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TERRITORIAL SECURITY SITUATION MARCH 1975  
MR 3

Sector	Sub-Sector	Number				Population			NVA & VC
		Sub-Sector	Village	Hamlet	A, B&C (1) Hamlet	D & E (1) Hamlet	Total		
Binh Tuy	3	14	25	60	146,144	20,751	166,895	8,969	
Long Khanh	4	19	21	105	247,771	9,787	257,558	(3)	
Phuoc Long	5	7	19	66		999	999	38,977	
Binh Long	3	13	29	63	7,008	167	7,175	11,412	
Binh Duong	6	41	53	132	267,275	2,170	269,445	1,899	
Tay Ninh	4	28	46	124	386,898	67,219	454,117	(3)	
Hau Nghia	4	21	25	139	216,483	22,724	239,207	(3)	
Bien Hoa	6	65	72	196	543,109	3,828	546,937	(3)	
Phuoc Tuy	5	23	30	109	165,548	498	166,046	(3)	
Long An	7	81	81	395	394,225	25,163	419,388	(3)	
Gia Dinh	8	74	74	360	1,544,833	4,648	1,549,481	(3)	
Vung Tau	(2)	5	5	33	108,266	0	108,266	(3)	
Do Thanh	11	60	60	412	1,943,285	0	1,943,285	(3)	
TOTAL	66	451	540	2,194	5,870,805	157,954	6,128,799	61,257	

- (1) Same as Figure 9-7A
- (2) Same as Figure 9-7A
- (3) Same as Figure 9-7A

Figure 9-7C

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TERRITORIAL SECURITY SITUATION MARCH 1975  
MR 4

Sector	Sub-Sector	Number			Population			NVA & VC
		Sub-sector	Village	Hamlet	A, B&C (1) Hamlets	D & E (1) Hamlets	Total	
Go Cong	5	32	32	260	218,138	0	218,138	(3)
Kien Tuong	4	17	28	62	39,000	2,000	41,000	16,000
Kien Phong	6	52	51	210	454,000	55,000	1,009,000	(3)
Dinh Tuong	9	95	92	448	466,000	64,000	530,000	11,000
Kien Hoa	10	116	116	620	591,000	72,000	663,000	1,000
Vinh Binh	7	52	56	411	206,000	135,000	341,000	110,000
Vinh Long	7	65	65	280	523,000	72,000	595,000	12,000
An Giang	4	38	38	254	652,000	0	652,000	2,618
Kien Giang	8	46	46	216	158,000	90,000	1,058,000	145,000
Chuong Thien	6	34	34	168	104,000	88,000	192,000	174,000
Phong Dinh	7	42	42	235	330,000	52,000	382,000	17,000
Ba Xuyen	8	54	54	326	378,000	63,000	441,000	44,000
An Xuyen	6	22	24	179	177,000	3,000	180,000	123,000
Bac Lieu	4	19	19	194	225,000	52,000	277,000	97,000
Chau Doc	5	57	57	269	630,000	6,366	636,366	(3)
Sadec	5	36	36	129	310,000	1,000	311,000	(3)
Rach Gia	(2)	5	5	18	84,080	0	84,080	(3)
My Tho	(2)	6	6	30	125,280	0	125,280	(3)
Can Tho	2	8	8	32	188,233	0	188,233	(3)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>796</b>	<b>809</b>	<b>4,341</b>	<b>5,858,731</b>	<b>755,366</b>	<b>7,924,091</b>	<b>752,618</b>

- (1) Same as Figure 9-7A
- (2) Same as Figure 9-7A
- (3) Same as Figure 9-7A

Figure 9-7D

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## CHAPTER 10

RVNAF COMMUNICATIONS-ELECTRONICS CAPABILITY1. SINGLE INTEGRATED MILITARY (TELECOMMUNICATIONS) SYSTEM (SIMS):

a. Due to enemy activity in Military Regions (MR's) 1 and 2, the effectiveness and capability of the overall SIMS was drastically reduced. The loss of many major SIMS sites impacted heavily on circuit alternate routing capabilities, both within the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) and out-of-country circuitry to Thailand the Philippines. South-to-North communications via the SIMS were severed with the fall of Da Nang, Pleiku and Nha Trang in late March and early April 1975.

b. The loss of the Nha Trang and Vung Tau cableheads severed out-of-country communications via the submarine cables to the Philippines and Thailand. Primary dedicated communications, secure/nonsecure voice and data, then became solely dependent upon the TSC-54 terminal for worldwide access.

2. COMMUNICATIONS-ELECTRONICS (C-E) SELF-SUFFICIENCY:

a. Repair and maintenance skills of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) technicians continued to show improvement in self-sufficiency in the maintenance of their C-E assets. Besides being 100% site qualified in their primary Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) on the SIMS, they were receiving continued cross-training in a secondary MOS. Cross-training in progress represented approximately 11% of the calendar year maintenance support posture for the SIMS sites. The drawdown in September 1974 of US contractor technical assistance in support of Area Maintenance Supply Facility-Vietnam (AMSF-V) emergency/technical assistance callouts had no severe impact on the operation of the SIMS. The AMSF-V continued to gain operational and maintenance experience and professional confidence in their own capabilities, resulting in less reliance on US contractor assistance.

b. To augment the self-sufficiency of the RVNAF, two informal training programs were developed during this reporting period for communication equipment in the SIMS. The Ten Kilowatt Power Amplifier Program was implemented, then temporarily suspended after the first course, since five of the seven involved links had been abandoned due to enemy action. The second course (Radio and Multiplex Refresher Training Program) was not implemented.

3. RVNAF JGS/J6 REORGANIZATION: On 1 January 1975, by Ministry of National Defense (MOND) decree, the RVNAF JGS/J6 was reorganized. The reorganization increased the JGS/J6 responsibilities and deactivated the Army Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) Signal Department.

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Concurrently it established the Telecommunications Command, which assumed the functions previously assigned to the ARVN Signal Department. The chief of JGS/J6 was appointed as chief of the newly formed Telecommunications Command. The realignment of functions and units within the JGS/J6 Telecommunications Command improved the management system and increased the effectiveness to fulfill the RVNAF C-E mission. It considerably reduced the duplication of effort in the planning, programming, engineering and long line communications functions, previously done jointly by JGS/J6, ARVN Signal Department and Communications Management Agency (CMA). The Signal Department and CMA were combined under the JGS/J6 with the functions being performed by the seven respective JGS/J6 operating divisions. The reorganization was effected on 1 March 1975.

#### 4. SELECTED C-E EVALUATIONS:

##### a. Undersea cable outage.

(1) The 439L "G" link, between Vung Tau and Vayama failed at 110422Z February 1975. While restoration of the cable was strictly a US function, the RVNAF SIMS was an integral part of Annex F to the Defense Communication Agency Pacific Group (DCA-PAC) OPLAN 502-75, Pacific Cable Restoral Plan. Phases III, IV and V of this plan depended on RVNAF SIMS sites to accomplish rerouting of critical group/circuits through the SIMS. Implementation of the aforementioned phases was disappointing due to the circuit quality problems encountered in the Republic of Vietnam. Phase III, re-route of Group 77CQ04, was never successfully implemented due to numerous signal level and noise problems.

(2) Efforts to determine the cause of difficulties encountered in the RVN were not successful. However, it is suspected that SIMS equipment problems experienced during the implementation of the RVN portion of the DCA-PAC OPLAN were compounded by lack of aggressive troubleshooting by RVNAF site personnel.

##### b. RVNAF Tandem Switching Center (TSC) problems.

(1) During the month of March, several visits were made to the Tan Son Nhut TSC to investigate reports that SIMS problems were limiting the number of calls completed through the tandem. Daily checks on tandem trunk condition revealed that many ICS circuits were not within specifications. Furthermore, a complete survey of all tandem trunks was not possible due to negative contact with the distant tandem. Another series of tests, conducted in conjunction with Integrated Communications System (ICS) personnel, was scheduled to determine if these negative contacts were due to

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equipment malfunctions at the distant tandem or due to circuit quality problems in the ICS. Tandem call completion rate was shown to improve dramatically when TSC Operations and Maintenance (O&M) personnel conscientiously performed trunk tests and shut down trunks that were not capable of passing tandem traffic.

(2) Due to the numerous problems in processing calls through the TSC, a joint US/RVNAF working group was established to review the necessity and economy of keeping RVN TSC or eliminating them if necessary. Closure of the tandems required that RVNAF Dial Telephone Exchanges (DTE's) be regraded to provide service by means of additional operator dial trunks terminating at selected DTE's in each of the four MR's. Since this scheme did not entail use of multi-frequency signaling, it was expected that the tandem trunks then in existence were of sufficient quality to support this plan.

## c. Loss and abandonment of DTE's and TSC's.

(1) The deteriorating tactical situation in the RVN resulted in the loss or abandonment of all DTE's and TSC's in MR's 1 and 2 by early April 1975, summarized as follows:

### Military Region 1

Da Nang TSC	63 Tandem/87 Primary Trunks	Lost
Da Nang Air Base DTE	4,000 Lines	Lost
Da Nang East DTE	2,000 Lines	Lost
Phu Bai DTE	2,000 Lines	Removed/ Lost
Chu Lai DTE	600 Lines	Lost

### Military Region 2

Nha Trang TSC	51 Tandem/69 Primary Trunks	Abandoned
Cam Ranh DTE	2,400 Lines	Abandoned
Qui Nhon DTE	2,000 Lines	Abandoned
Nha Trang DTE	2,000 Lines	Abandoned
Dalat DTE	1,000 Lines	Abandoned
Ban Me Thuot DTE	1,000 Lines	Lost
Pleiku DTE	2,700 Lines	Lost

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Phu Cat DTE	1,500 Lines	Abandoned
Phan Rang DTE	1,500 Lines	Abandoned

(2) In addition to the above sites, the following manual switchboards associated with the SIMS were considered abandoned and/or lost:

## Military Region 1

Hue	200 Lines	Lost
Quang Tri	100 Lines	Lost
Tam Ky	100 Lines	Lost
Quang Ngai	100 Lines	Lost

## Military Region 2

Tuy Hoa	100 Lines	Lost
Phan Thiet	160 Lines	Lost
Gia Nghia	160 Lines	Lost
Bao Loc	100 Lines	Lost
Phan Rang South	160 Lines	Lost
Hau Bon	160 Lines	Lost
Kontum	160 Lines	Lost
Ba Ngoi	160 Lines	Abandoned
My Ca	160 Lines	Abandoned
Nha Trang NCO Academy	200 Lines	Abandoned
Dien Khanh Rec. Center	160 Lines	Abandoned

(3) During the month of February 1975, CMA engineers conducted a pre-removal survey of the Phu Bai DTE. Decision to remove the DTE was based on decreased telephone requirements in the Phu Bai area coupled with the need for a DTE in Hue. Original plans called for the separation of the Phu Bai DTE equipment into two shipments, the first consisting of enough equipment to install a 1000-line exchange at Hue; the second consisting of individual parts intended for storage at the AMSF-V at Long Binh.

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(4) A tactical manual switchboard, AN/TTC-7, was installed at Phu Bai to satisfy the remaining requirements in that area. Cutover, on 1 March 1975, was accomplished entirely by ARVN 610th Signal Battalion personnel. Numerous complaints were received from the subscribers concerning the quality of service provided by the tactical switchboard. These difficulties were the result of equipment problems in the AN/TTC-7.

(5) The DTE removal began on 20 March 1975 and was cut short by the deteriorating tactical situation in the Hue/Phu Bai area on 23 March 1975. At that time it was decided to move all removed equipment to Long Binh as it was not considered feasible to install 1000 lines at Hue. Seven truckloads of equipment were subsequently shipped to Tam My pier outside Hue for further sea transportation to points south. The equipment was later abandoned at Tam My, as all available transportation was utilized to evacuate refugees from the area.

(6) While execution of the plan was imperfect, the ARVN Signal personnel at Phu Bai did everything they could to evacuate the DTE equipment.

d. Pr'Line - Pleiku link evaluation. An operational evaluation was performed during February 1975 on the Pr'Line - Pleiku link. The CMA evaluation team was assisted by contractor and DAO personnel. Test results were more than satisfactory on this link although the prevalent system-wide problem of hot levels was in evidence.

## 5. LOGISTICS:

### a. Area maintenance and supply facility.

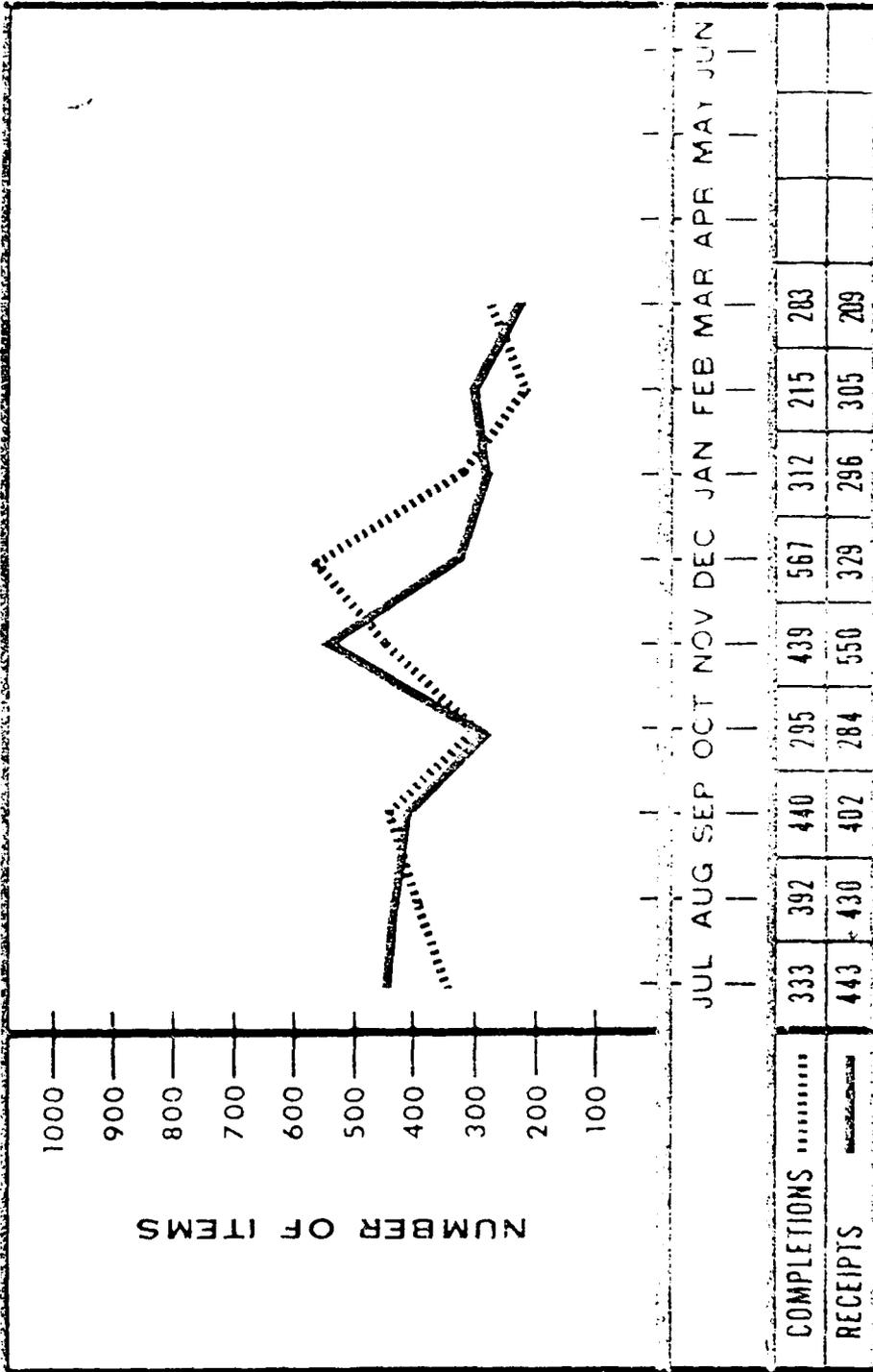
(1) Maintenance receipt of unserviceables/completions (Fig 10-1). There was no identifiable trend in the receipt of unserviceables, but the number of completions seemed to follow the number of receipts. Increased emphasis on the prompt turn-in of unserviceables would have enabled the maintenance activity at AMSF-V to perform at a higher level of effectiveness.

(2) SIMS sites supply status in-country support (Fig 10-2). Supply status for SIMS sites in-country remained stable with the total due-outs running approximately twice the number of requisitions received.

(3) Supply Effectiveness Authorized Stockage List (ASL) items (Fig 10-3). Demand satisfaction (percentage of ASL requisitions received which were filled) continued to fluctuate erratically; however, the general trend was upward. This reflects the effects

AMSF MAINTENANCE RECEIPT OF UNSERVICEABLES COMPLETIONS

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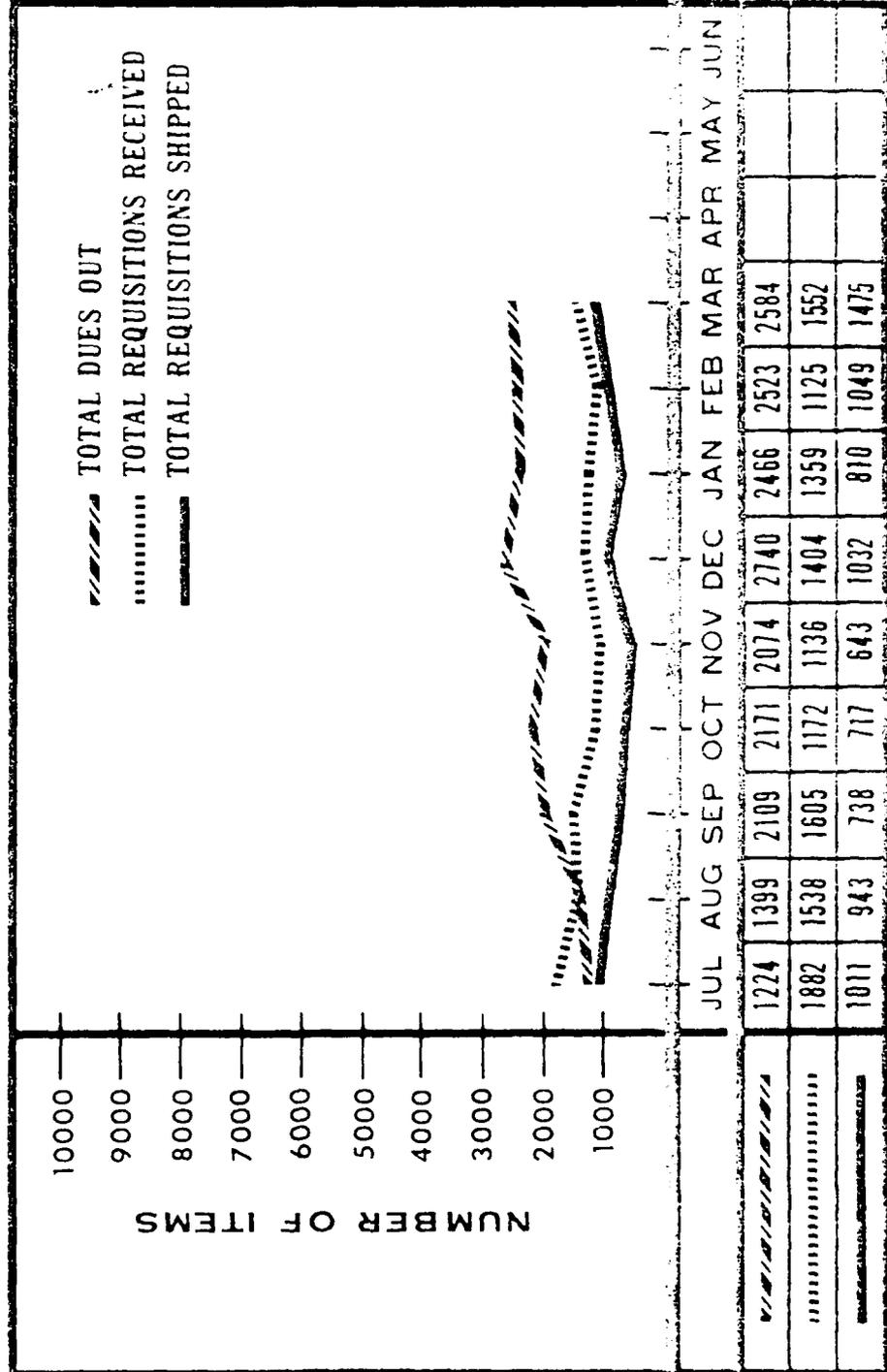


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Figure 10-1

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AMSF SIMS SITES SUPPLY STATUS IN COUNTRY SUPPORT

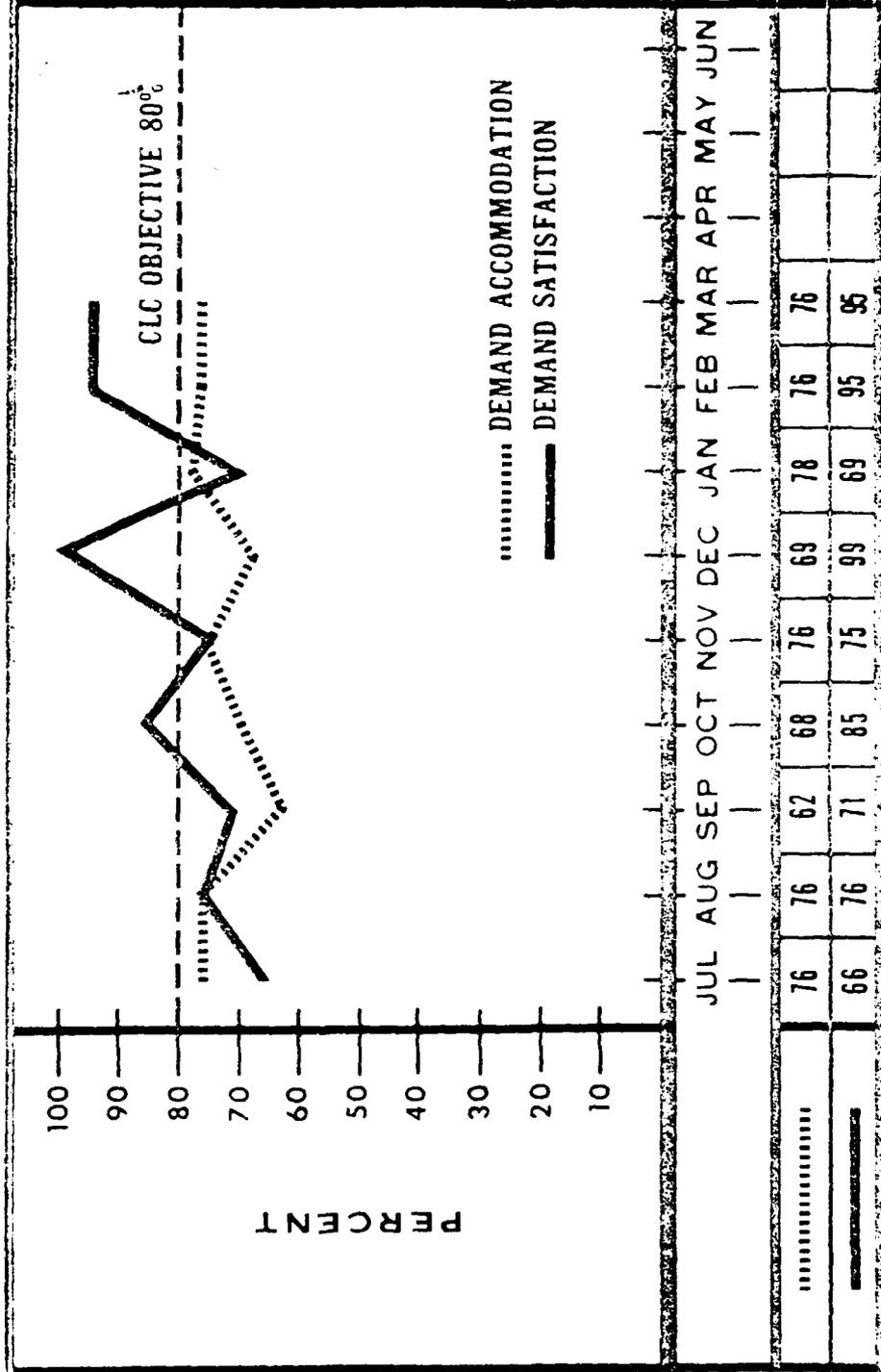


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Figure 10-2

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AMSF SUPPLY EFFECTIVENESS (ASL ITEMS)



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Figure 10-3

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of the AMSF ASL purification efforts. However, demand accommodation (percentage of total requisitions received which were filled from ASL stocks) continued slightly below the 80% objective.

(4) Maintenance, Backlog - Deadlined (Fig 10-4). Although the backlog varied with the receipts of unserviceables, both the backlog and the number of items deadlined for parts showed a very healthy downward trend.

## b. 60th Signal Base Depot.

(1) Module Rebuild Program (Fig 10-5). The module repair programs were the subject of intensive review during this reporting period and the schedules were revised downward to more realistic figures. All programs were functioning satisfactorily, except AN/GRC-106, which was hindered by shortages of repair parts and lag in turn-in of unserviceables.

(2) Major Components Rebuild Program (Fig 10-6). The major component rebuild programs were revised downward to more realistic schedules during this period. Performance was adequate except in audio visual and radar, which were retarded by a lack of repairable unserviceables.

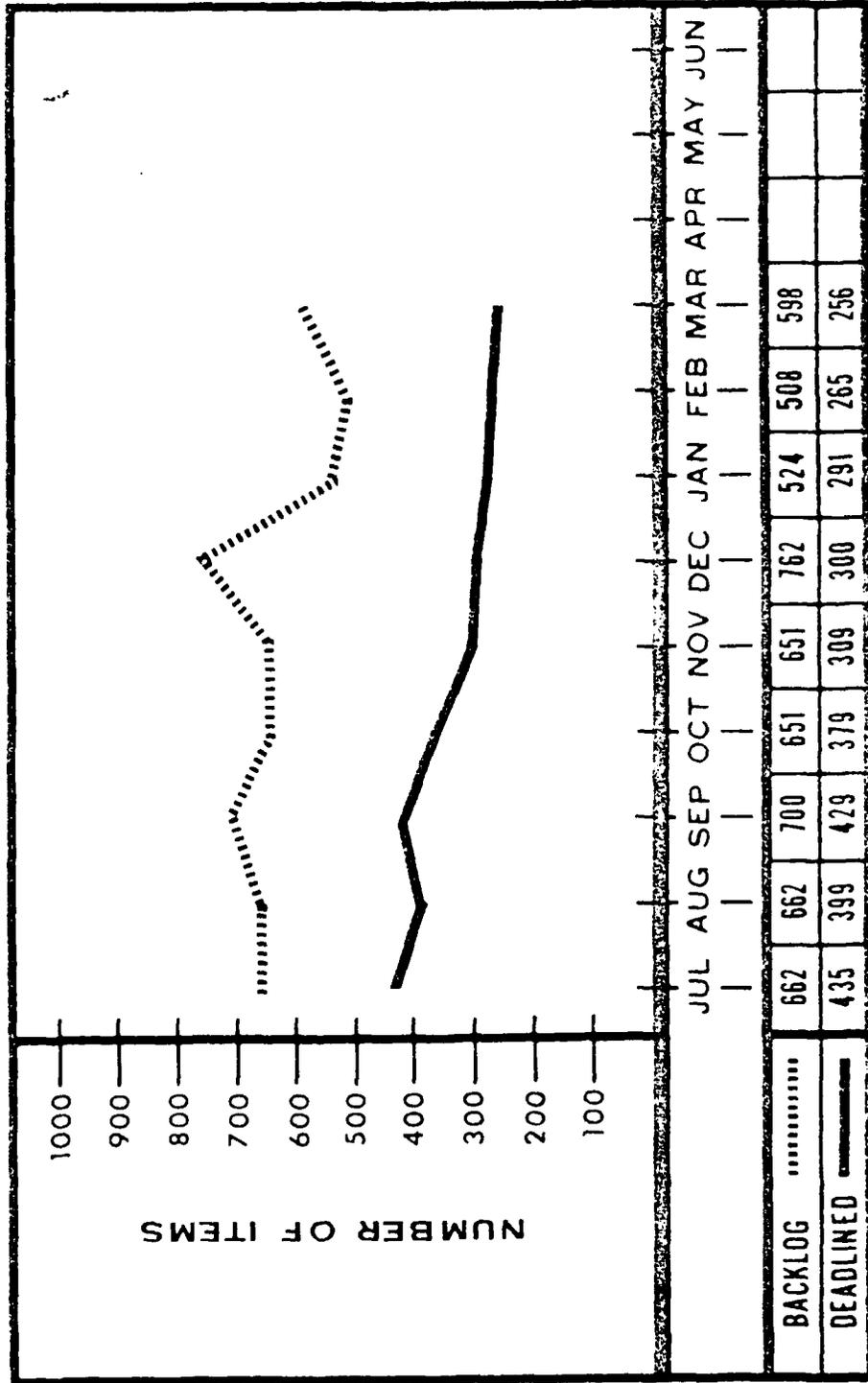
## 6. CONCLUSION.

a. The RVNAF communications capabilities continued to support combat operations. The North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong (NVA/VC) offensive in March 1975 and the precipitous evacuation of the Kontum-Pleiku area by the Government of Vietnam marked the reversal of the military situation. Previously, both the RVNAF JGS/J6 and C-E Division staffs were pursuing several programs to consolidate and refine communications-electronics activities in South Vietnam. The efforts were in response to Defense Assistance, Vietnam (DAV), which imposed FY75 fund limitations, as well as those actions judged necessary to improve the overall capabilities of the RVNAF. During 1974, weaknesses and deficiencies in RVNAF C-E operations and logistics had been identified and remedial courses of action established. With the March reversal of the general military situation, both strategic and tactical communications resources were steadily lost or abandoned.

b. During March and April 1975, as the military situation rapidly deteriorated, SIMS strategic communications sites in MR's 1, 2 and 3 were successively lost due to the withdrawal of combat units. Only those sites in the Saigon area and the delta remained in GVN hands. The remaining portions of the system continued to operate throughout April and probably were relatively intact when lost to the enemy after the fall of the GVN.

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### AMSF MAINTENANCE BACKLOG - DEADLINED

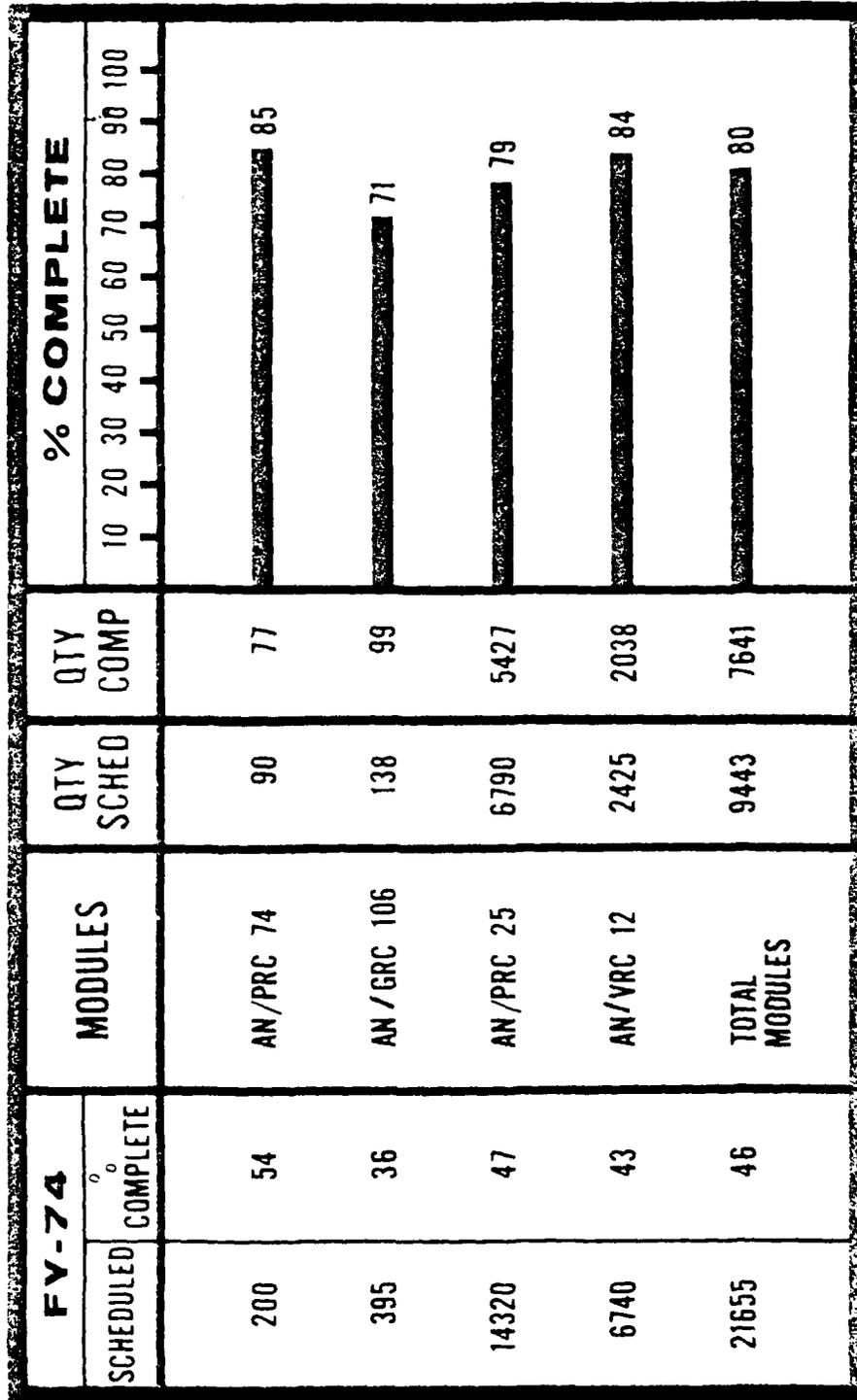


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Figure 10-4

60TH SIGNAL BASE DEPOT MODULE REBUILD PROGRAM FY-75 -- MAR 1975

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Figure 10-5

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60TH SIGNAL BASE DEPOT MAJOR COMPONENTS REBUILD PROGRAM FY-75 - MAR 1975

FY-74		TYPE EQUIPMENT	QTY SCHED	QTY COMP	% COMPLETE
SCHEDULED	% COMPLETE				
3245	76	RADIO	2486	1485	59
977	90	CARRIER AND VHF	496	434	87
109	49	MICROWAVE	343	304	88
81	30	AUDIOVISUAL	82	47	57
17	6	PHOTO	35	31	88
237	92	WIRE	360	336	93
168	55	TELETYPE	91	76	83
397	97	TMDE	609	529	86
37	70	RADAR	121	78	64
5268	79	TOTAL PROGRAM	4623	3320	71

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Figure 10-6

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c. As the hostile threat increased, contractors providing technical assistance and C-E Division field teams in the military regions had to be withdrawn. US contractor assistance to the Communications Management Agency (CMA) was terminated on 15 January 1975 in an effort to divert DAV funds to higher priority requirements. The DAO C-E Division personnel fulfilled needs for further technical assistance and there was no significant impact on communications operations from this action. Eastern Construction Co., Inc., (ECCOI) personnel had provided maintenance technical assistance to ARVN logistics centers. They were progressively reduced as territorial losses were suffered in MR's 1 and 2. On 21 April 1975, the remaining ECCOI personnel were withdrawn from the 60th Signal Base Depot and the contract terminated. The Federal Electric Corporation (FEC) maintenance technicians were drawn down from the AMSF-V in a similar manner and terminated on 26 April 1975.

d. During late March and most of April, intensive joint DAO and RVNAF efforts were underway to recover and reconstitute combat units withdrawn from MR's 1 and 2. Tactical communications equipment was called forward and assembled from RVNAF maintenance and supply facilities. Sufficient quantities were available to substantially equip some units but there was insufficient time and resources to equip all units. This effort was generally diluted due to indecision by the JGS, failure of the leadership to mobilize maintenance and logistic resources and inability of key officials to effectively allocate and control resources.

e. The RVNAF did not attain sufficient maturity, technical expertise and managerial capabilities to completely maintain, operate and logistically support their communications systems and equipment resources. Some contributing factors were: limited and unresponsive transportation, difficulties in obtaining spare parts and the low morale common to most elements of the RVNAF.

f. Senior RVNAF officers continued to depend on DAO officials for positive direction and guidance. This dependency left them hesitant to respond to the day-to-day need for direction by their forces and unable to reallocate resources as new and constantly changing circumstances dictated. Lack of positive, aggressive and credible leadership that could weld their military services and diverse staffs into a single force with common goals continued, to the end, to be a pivotal factor.

# CONFIDENTIAL

## CHAPTER 11

### REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM ARMED FORCES (RVNAF) TRAINING

#### 1. (C) OFFSHORE TRAINING.

a. The critical in-country situation existing in late March 1975 resulted in the cancellation of all remaining Fiscal Year 1975 (FY 75) offshore training for the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) on 26 Mar 75 in order to preserve funds for higher priority requirements. Losses in students, spaces and dollars are as follows:

<u>RVN Service</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Spaces</u>	<u>Dollars</u>
Army (ARVN)	23	37	118,160
Air Force (VNAF)	8	9	53,530
Navy (VNN)	49	81	258,290
Marine Corps (VNNMC)	<u>9</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>28,210</u>
TOTAL	89	140	458,190

Although this training was cancelled, original training requirements remained unchanged. The FY 76 Security Assistance Training Program (SATP) was processed in accordance with normal procedures, but was subsequently cancelled when the communist forces overran the country and took Saigon on 30 Apr 75. The following paragraphs outline the final objectives and assessments of RVNAF training system.

#### b. ARVN.

(1) Objectives of the ARVN FY 75 SATP remain the same as previously reported.

(2) The beginning ARVN FY 3/75 SATP contained 152 students who were scheduled to attend 206 courses at a cost of \$734,840.

(3) The ARVN FY 75 SATP as of the end of FY 3/75 contained 129 students who were scheduled to attend 169 courses at a cost of \$616,680. As of 30 Apr 75, the United States Secretary of Defense declared that students still in training could remain, but, upon graduation, would be placed in the refugee system.

(4) The ARVN FY 76 SATP was presented to the Pacific Command Tri-Service Security Assistance Training Conference during 24-28 Feb 75. The approved program contained 127 students in 153 courses at a cost of \$601,000. The ARVN Bicentennial Quarter (1 Jul-30 Sep 76) contained three students in three courses at a cost of \$17,250. All this training was subsequently cancelled.

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## c. VNAF.

(1) The objectives of the VNAF FY 75 SATP remain the same as previously reported.

(2) The beginning VNAF FY 3/75 SATP contained 42 students who were scheduled to attend 94 courses at a cost of \$759,570. The carry over cost from Military Assistance Service Funded (MASF) to Defense Assistance Vietnam (DAV) for previous years included 881 students and 1,167 training courses at a cost of \$4,321,257 as estimated by Headquarters USAF.

(3) There were four Program Change Notices (PCN's) initiated that adjusted 12 lines of training and reduced the FY 75 program by \$40,130.

(4) The VNAF FY 75 SATP as of 31 Mar 75 contained 30 students and 82 courses at a cost of \$719,440. The carry over was reevaluated by Headquarters USAF and was subsequently estimated at \$4,307,711. (See paragraph 1b(3) for current student status.)

(5) The VNAF FY 76 SATP was presented to the Pacific Command Tri-Service Security Assistance Training Conference during 24-28 Feb 75. The approved program contained 171 students in 358 courses at a cost of \$1,108,910. The VNAF Bicentennial Quarter contained 34 students in 86 courses at a cost of \$213,980. All this training was subsequently cancelled.

## d. VNN.

(1) Objectives of the VNN FY 75 SATP remain the same as previously reported.

(2) The beginning VNN FY 3/75 SATP contained 160 students who were scheduled to attend 241 courses at a cost of \$638,220.

(3) There were five PCN's initiated that adjusted 63 lines of training and reduced the program by \$268,090.

(4) The VNN FY 75 SATP as of 31 Mar 75 contained 101 students and 154 courses at a cost of \$370,130. (See paragraph 1b(3) for current student status.)

(5) The VNN FY 76 SATP was presented to the Pacific Command Tri-Service Security Assistance Training Conference during 24-28 Feb 75. The approved program contained 97 students in 190 courses at a cost of \$542,260. The VNN Bicentennial Quarter contained seven students in 12 courses at a cost of \$202,370. All this training was subsequently cancelled.

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e. VNMC.

(1) Objectives of the VNMC FY 75 SATP remain the same as previously reported.

(2) The beginning VNMC FY 3/75 SATP contained 14 students who were scheduled to attend 25 courses at a cost of \$39,700.

(3) There were three PCN's initiated that adjusted 19 lines of training and reduced the FY 75 program by \$33,540.

(4) The VNMC FY 75 SATP as of 31 Mar 75 contained two students and four courses at a cost of \$6,160. (See paragraph 1b(3) for current student status.)

(5) The VNMC FY 76 SATP was presented to the Pacific Command Tri-Service Security Assistance Training Conference during 24-28 Feb 75. The approved program contained 20 students in 46 courses at a cost of \$54,080. The VNMC Bicentennial Quarter contained three students in three courses at a cost of \$10,940. All this training was subsequently cancelled.

f. Status of RVNAF Students on 30 Apr 75. As of the close out date of this report, a total of 240 RVNAF students remained in training in the Continental United States (CONUS). As stated earlier, the Secretary of Defense had initially decreed that these students would remain in training pending a final decision on their disposition. Once students either graduate from a course or are disenrolled (if such a decision is made), they will be integrated into the current refugee program. The remaining CONUS students are categorized as follows:

(1) ARVN.

(a) University Students (MASF/Agency for International Development (AID) sponsored; All training costs obligated from FY 74 Army MASF).....23

(b) SATP students undergoing training in the CONUS; All training costs obligated from FY 75 DAV).....77

(2) VNAF.

(a) University Students (MASF/AID sponsored; All FY 73-74 carry over and FY 75 training costs obligated from FY 75 DAV)..... 1

# CONFIDENTIAL

(b) Nursing Students (MASF/AID sponsored; All FY 72, 73, 74 carry over and FY 75 training costs obligated from FY 75 DAV).....22

(c) SATP Students undergoing training in the CONUS; (FY 75 training costs obligated from FY 75 DAV).....32

(3) VNN.

(a) University Students (MASF/AID sponsored; All training costs obligated from FY 74 Navy MASF).....18

(b) Postgraduate Students at Monterey (SATP sponsored; All FY 74 training costs obligated from FY 74 Navy MASF; All FY 75 training costs obligated from FY 75 DAV).....22

(c) SATP students undergoing training in the CONUS; (All training costs obligated from the FY 75 DAV).....37

(4) VNMC.

(a) No University or Postgraduate Students.

(b) SATP students undergoing training in the CONUS; (All training costs obligated from FY 75 DAV)..... 8

TOTAL.....240

## 2. (C) IN-COUNTRY TRAINING.

a. ARVN.

(1) General. Interruptions in ARVN reporting procedures during the quarter limited the Training Center (TC) statistics to January and February. They are presented for historical purposes.

(a) Recruits completing basic training at National Training Centers (NTC's) equated to 44% of programmed output. This low percentage was in contrast to 137% output of recruits from Division Training Centers (DTC's). Explanations set forth by the Central Training Command (CTC) for this disparity in recruitment are:

1 DTC's offered the recruit military service within the proximity

# CONFIDENTIAL

of his family residence, while NTC recruits were posted throughout the country as dictated by the overall needs of the service.

2 The Manpower Mobilization Board did not serve sufficient service induction notices to citizens eligible for military conscription.

(b) Antiarmor training received increased emphasis early in the quarter. Tube-launched, Optically-tracked, Wire-guided (TOW) heavy antiarmor missile operational readiness continued to be under close command scrutiny.

(c) Popular Forces (PF) demonstrated their recruitment posture with a trainee output of 117% of their programmed forecast.

(d) RVNAF Service Schools. CTC placed its schools on a war-time schedule, shortening some Programs of Instruction (POI). All schools had below programmed input for the quarter.

(2) National and division training centers. (Figures 11-1 and 2).

(a) Recruit training. Between 1 Jan and 1 Mar 75, 15,292 ARVN and Regional Forces (RF) recruits completed their basic training at ten NTC's. This number represented a 55% decrease in recruits over the previous two-month period. DTC cadres trained 4,016 ARVN recruits, a decrease of 1,379 recruits from the Nov/Dec output levels.

(b) Unit and refresher training. Unit training in NTC's was for the most part cancelled during the quarter because of operational commitments. All training in centers was cancelled about 15 Mar 75 and training assets, M-16's, M-60 machine guns, etc. were made available and distributed to operational units.

(3) RVNAF service schools. CTC programmed the entry of 63,368 personnel in CY 75 for training in professional, combat arms, technical, and administrative schools. Austerity restrictions imposed during CY 74 carry over into CY 75 budget planning made the obtaining of 63,000 service school graduates this year unlikely. Combat arms and some technical schools were scheduled to receive increased emphasis during CY 75. To adequately fund a high input of combat arms trainees, budget funds were borrowed from some technical schools and from the administrative school. All schools were closed in early April 1975.

(a) Professional schools. The CY 75 forecast of 14,909 student entries into the seven professional schools was high and could not have been realized. During CY 1/75, the professional schools graduated 12.3% of their programmed yearly output, far below normal. Operational commitments were the primary reason.



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(b) Combat arms. The Infantry School for Reserve Officers had an input of 1,338 trainees and graduated 1,129 during CY 1/75. The Armor School entered 562 trainees and had an output of 42. A total of 369 Artillery Officer Trainees entered training, but there were no graduates. The yearly forecast of programmed input for the three schools was 15,285. At the close of CY 1/75, 14% of the programmed input had completed training.

(c) Technical schools. Student input lagged for the second consecutive quarter with an output of 2,900 graduates. This amounted to 50% of the number who should have graduated according to the yearly programmed input.

(d) Administrative schools. The CY 75 programmed input of 10,098 students was adjusted downward. During CY 1/75, 1,475 entered training and 919 graduated.

(4) Antiarmor. Training in this area received a high priority. During this reporting period, operational readiness of the TOW was reported to be 95%. Training emphasis continued on infantry teams using the M-72. The resultant loss of Saigon and the nation precludes any assessment of the training, though intelligence reports described the destruction of considerable numbers of enemy tanks.

(5) Air Defense (AD). During the quarter, an AD small arms booklet was translated and forwarded to CTC who incorporated the new material into their present AD POI. There were no marked changes in AD battalion training.

(6) Assessment. Training problems were amplified during the quarter with a continued shortage of recruits, training ammunition, and food allowance for the trainees. In March the GVN lowered the recruit induction age to 17 years. It was never determined where these new recruits would be trained. During March seven training centers were overrun by the enemy and several others were in imminent danger (see maps). During April, the remaining centers were closed or overrun. In the final days, all ARVN training had ceased as the enemy bore down on the capital.

## b. VNAF.

(1) The rapid and extensive increase in enemy activity during Mar 75 reduced training to a very low priority in VNAF. Concern for long-term ongoing training requirements was still very real. The losses of Pleiku Air Base with the 6th Air Division Headquarters and Da Nang Air Base with the 1st Air Division Headquarters constituted a severe blow to VNAF. Benefits which could have accrued if the remnants of these trained cadres had been distributed throughout the remaining VNAF units in an equitable fashion were

# CONFIDENTIAL

never fully realized. The influx of trained personnel into the Saigon area apparently helped to generate attack sorties from Tan Son Nhut (TSN) but the effort was short-lived once the enemy came within rocket and artillery range of the airfield.

(2) As the level of flying activity increased to meet the increased hostile actions, the VNAF's survival depended primarily on the expertise of the VNAF mechanics who were now virtually on their own. Important qualifying factors were available bench stocks of spare parts, rapid replacement of spares, power and water outages/shortages, etc. Even in normal times (by Vietnam standards), VNAF's overall training effort, (formal, semiformal and On-The-Job Training (OJT)), would still have been in a continuing state of flux for the following reasons:

(a) Lack of direction from the Joint General Staff (JGS) RVNAF, as to a final authorized aircraft inventory and personnel manning ratio, placed long-range training planning in an almost impossible situation.

(b) The withdrawal of all US contractor personnel (US and LN Vietnamese aircraft maintenance specialists) in MR's 1 and 2 could have provided VNAF and the DAO a very positive basis for comparison in future assessments as VNAF would have been forced to carry on without the previous level of US contractor assistance. The subsequent events negated such a comparison which could have better quantified the value of contractor training.

(c) Remote area maintenance support, supply and security (particularly at Pleiku and Da Nang), were a continuing problem. The offensive and resultant loss of territory and bases had, to some extent, reduced this problem and allowed VNAF to consolidate its remaining trained resources into MR's 3 and 4 which were theoretically more defensible and easier to support logistically. Such did not prove to be the case as NVA/VC ground forces drove back the ARVN so quickly and decisively that consolidation was never completed before the airfields came under fire.

(3) A situation update survey planned for the month of March at all nine air bases, Air Training Command (ATC) and Air Technical Logistics Command (ATLC) was curtailed due to increased enemy activity. The curtailment reduced the data base extensively and made future evaluations questionable. The resultant losses eliminated all further evaluations.

(a) The following comments, based on evidence gathered during visits in the Saigon area coupled with information provided by VNAF Headquarters, constitute the best assessment available. The comments derived from the on-site inspections are valid. All

# CONFIDENTIAL

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comments, conclusions and recommendations derived from the official VNAF Headquarters are conditionally qualified as source material. As with previous sections of this chapter, they are presented for historical purposes.

(b) Prior to the loss of Nha Trang, VNAF retained the capability, in-country, to train in nearly all Air Force Speciality Codes (AFSC) to any level they desired, using their standards. The list was being expanded by AFSC and higher levels within basic AFSC at the time the country began to collapse.

(c) The JGS authorized strength for VNAF as of 28 Feb 75 remained 64,905 with 96.2% manning (62,449). Manpower training requirements continued to be adjusted but, without positive direction from JGS/RVNAF as to a final aircraft inventory and manning ratio, any long-range planning was superfluous. The losses of large numbers of aircraft and unknown status of personnel from Pleiku and Da Nang added to the future training questions, all of which were overcome by subsequent events.

(4) There were three positive indicators of the level of VNAF trained manpower resources and where they were going until 9 Mar 75 when the final offensive started. These indicators are still valid to some extent and are included for information.

(a) As of 31 Dec 74 VNAF manning was 56.6% at the 5, 7, and 9 level. As of 28 Feb 75 the percentage had increased to 59.4%. This is up from 47.8% on 1 Jan 74. There were two reasons for this increase and its importance to DAO.

1 VNAF achieved this increase in skill level manning ratios while decreasing overall manning. Peak manning was achieved in Jun 74 with 63,381 against 64,905 authorized or 97.7%. Since then, manning levels dropped by 1.5% to 62,449 but the upward shift in skill level ratio continued.

2 VNAF was authorized 2,115 new recruits for CY 75, or less than 200 a month. This had not changed as of 31 March but expansion was under consideration. The figures for the last eight months indicate VNAF was recruiting 185 monthly against a planned attrition of 300. This was one way to minimize the impact of a potential reduction in force and one that seemed to be working for VNAF. This policy was overtaken by events.

(b) VNAF for the foreseeable future had an excess of trained pilots. There was some question as to their night and instrument training qualifications. With the exception of the transports and special mission aircraft (including medical evacuation helicopters), little or no instrument or night flight operations were being conducted. This problem was addressed in the last assessment. No

# CONFIDENTIAL

change occurred until the enemy offensive started. Tactical missions were then programmed for around-the-clock, all-weather operations, and were flown as programmed. The results of this "new" operational mode for VNAF fighter-bombers will probably never be known.

(c) Training of recruits to the 1 and 3 levels was minimal. As of 1 Mar 75, the majority of classes were at the 7-level with significant numbers of 9-level and some 5-level classes also being conducted. While this positive response by VNAF to middle management insufficiencies was commendable, this program too was overcome by events. A study was made and submitted and the final decision to suspend further training was implemented. As a result, recruit training, shop maintenance OJT and aircrew refresher/upgrade were the only training being conducted by the VNAF near the end. The refresher training was conducted in the A-1, C-7, AC-47 and AC-119G aircraft which were taken out of storage to expand the tactical and logistical response capability of VNAF. Again, results will never be known.

(5) Assessment. The overall combat situation throughout the RVN caused a serious review within VNAF of the entire training effort. The following is the DAO assessment of the final suspended training situation: VNAF had a solid training manpower cadre from top to bottom. They could have survived with secure operating bases and they had the qualified personnel to resume training in nearly all categories had their country survived the NVA onslaught.

## c. VNN.

(1) Progress during the early part of the reporting period continued in training professional naval personnel. Training emphasis was broadened to include underway training, unit training and civilian apprenticeship programs. The latter were conducted at VNN shipyards and at maintenance overhaul facilities. Primary emphasis was placed on the training of instructors for in-country training activities and fleet units.

(a) The input level of the Junior Officers Staff Course remained high and the Senior Officers Staff Course was increased by 33%. Future classes were to consist of fifty officers each. Some commanders were being released from duties for class attendance, even while the enemy offensive was in motion.

(b) The fleet Underway Training Group was reinforced and transferred from the jurisdiction of the Cam Ranh Bay Training Center to that of the Fleet Commander. It never began its assigned mission.

(c) The transfer of the Storekeeper, Disbursing Clerk and Commissaryman School from Cat Lai to Cam Ranh Bay had begun on 1 Mar but was never completed.

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(d) Basic medical technician training began at the Saigon Training Center in mid-March. The courses were based on the standard RVNAF curricula in use by the ARVN and VNAF. Following completion of training at the center, students were to move to the RVNAF Medical School, Saigon, for advanced specialty work.

(2) During FY 3/75, 1,570 officers, NCO and enlisted men graduated from in-country service schools and training centers. Enlisted recruiting and recruit training were halted for the remainder of CY 75.

(3) Assessment. The training capability of the Vietnamese Navy continued to increase. The personnel changes made in 1st and 2nd quarters FY 75 showed positive results in both training quantity and training quality. The greater numbers of CONUS trained personnel in instructor billets were making their weight felt. Unit and underway training continued to show improvement. The assistance of the Security Assistance Surveillance Program personnel in maintenance of VNN personnel end-use was greatly appreciated by DAO. Coordinated efforts of VNN and DAO, resulting in a closer monitoring of personnel, caused the VNN to exercise greater care in the initial assignments of returning CONUS trained personnel. While the overall aspects of the VNN training program showed praiseworthy improvements in FY 3/75, the serious deterioration of the military posture late in the quarter made any prognosis extremely nebulous. The loss of the country in the latter stages of the reporting period destroyed what had promised to become a very effective, quality training program.

## d. VNMC.

(1) Of major importance in FY 3/75 was the training of the new 3rd VNMC Infantry Brigade. The initial cadre of personnel came from the deactivated 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 5th ARVN Railway Security Battalions, with an augmentation of recruits from the training program at Song Than Base Camp. Artillery training was given in battalion strength units in MR 1. However, heavy combat losses in March required the increase in recruit basic military training at Song Than to thirteen companies of 150 men each. NCO refresher training was conducted at Song Than and the NCO school at Nha Trang. Fifty-seven VNMC reserve officers were being trained at the ARVN Infantry School, Long Thanh, and special training for both officers and NCO's was given at the Ranger Training School at Duc My.

(2) Marine training continued to be assault-oriented, but VNN commitments of landing craft and personnel precluded actual amphibious operations. Problems continued to plague the combat training tank at Song Than Base Camp, but the dry-net trainer continued to be used, and the theory of amphibious assault training was continued.

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### 3. (U) IN-COUNTRY ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING PROGRAM (ELTP).

#### a. Intensive ELTP (full-time).

(1) The Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces Language School (RVNAFLS) designated by the CTC as the primary English language training center for all three services, operated at less than 20% of its rated capacity. The military student load decreased from 271 to 212. Of 151 SATP designated candidates who took the official English Comprehension Level Test, 80% achieved the average qualifying score of 70 for direct entry into CONUS training.

(2) The VNAF English Language School (VNAFELS) located in Nha Trang also conducted an intensive ELTP geared to qualifying VNAF personnel for the SATP. The student load decreased from 83 to 33 with a marked shift in emphasis from training to combat readiness.

#### b. Nonintensive ELTP (part-time).

(1) The following units of the RVNAF conducted nonintensive English language training: Vietnamese National Military Academy and Political Warfare College in Dalat, Vietnamese National Naval Academy in Nha Trang, the Junior Military Academy in Vung Tau and the Naval Training Centers in Cam Ranh and Saigon.

(2) Technical assistance visits were made to the VNAFELS and the Naval Academy. At the Academy only one class, instead of the usual two, was undergoing midshipman training. The present class of 182 students was scheduled to graduate in Sep 75.

c. Accomplishments. Members of the Defense Language Institute Language Training Detachment conducted 970 student hours of training in the methodology of teaching specialized English Terminology to 92 members of the RVNAFLS instructor staff. The objective of the ongoing in-service training program was to qualify RVNAFLS instructors to teach terminology in electronics, weather, medical, supply, etc., in order to qualify SATP candidates for direct entry into service schools without any intermediate English language training in CONUS. With the new capability established at RVNAFLS, considerable savings were anticipated in the FY 76 SATP.

### 4. (U) CONTRACT TRAINING.

a. The following is a synoptic review of contract training through 9 Mar 75. As of 1 Jul 74 all formal training requirements were deleted from statements of work of all contractors supporting the RVNAF. Formal training was defined as scheduled classroom training where accurate attendance and progress records were maintained and reported to DAO.

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b. Other training conducted by contractor personnel generally fell into two categories.

(1) Semiformal and OJT. This was defined as part-time formal classroom curriculum and hands-on OJT in the shop area with training as the primary consideration.

(2) Augmentation and production OJT. This was defined as over-the-shoulder hands-off or shoulder-to-shoulder OJT, with production as the primary consideration and training secondary.

c. There existed a line definition, which varied from contract to contract, that allowed the Administrative Contracting Officer (ACO) and the Government Representative (GR) to approve requests for training assistance in specific areas on an "as needed" basis. The individual RVNAF service had to request the training. The GR validated the need in conjunction with DAO. The contracting officer determined the contractual legality and authorized the contractors to respond, if they were willing and able, without diminishing overall production through a diversion of manpower or other resources.

d. Informal training was being conducted until contractors were forced to leave. No reports were required and no records were maintained as to attendance and progress. If the trainees were available in the work area, OJT was provided. If trainees were not available, contractor personnel confined themselves to production. Some specialized certification of inspectors was done by contractor personnel and reported to DAO. Professional certification of individuals was authorized and implemented only within the various services. Contract training was considered, but the final authority was RVNAF.

e. From 10 Mar through 31 Mar 75 the picture altered drastically.

(1) All contractor personnel were evacuated from MR's 1 and 2 with the exception of Nha Trang and Phan Rang. Subsequently, all contractors departed the country leaving the RVNAF to provide for themselves during the last days.

(2) Training was by necessity one of the lowest priorities in RVNAF. Production toward continued survival was the order of the day.

(3) The situation made it all but impossible to obtain field reports from contractor personnel. DAO training managers discontinued inquiries on training status so that maximum effort could be placed on production. This procedure was followed until all contractors departed.

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## 5. (U) FINAL ASSESSMENT OF THE RVNAF TRAINING SYSTEM.

a. The DAO Training Management Section (TMS) had the primary responsibility for management of offshore, formal in-country and English language training for the RVNAF and assisted the service Communications-Electronics divisions in monitoring/evaluating contractor, in-service (OJT) and informal training conducted essentially at unit levels. The management of offshore training programs was feasible and thus controllable. The end-use surveillance of CONUS trained students, the monitoring/evaluation of over 100 RVNAF service schools and training centers, and especially the monitoring/evaluation of contractor and unit training efforts, previously handled by large advisory staffs, was far beyond the combined capabilities of TMS and the assigned training resources of the DAO divisions. For this reason, certain portions of this final assessment are based primarily on samplings of the various training activities.

b. The English Language Training Program (ELTP) was superimposed over nearly all RVNAF training activities. English language training was mandatory for CONUS schooling and for OJT with US contractors. In most cases it was required for in-country technical training where English language Technical Orders (TO's) were used.

(1) From its beginnings in the mid-1950's to the fall of the country, the program became highly developed and sophisticated, operated almost exclusively by the Vietnamese themselves, with only minimum guidance from two American English language experts. In the entire spectrum of in-country training, it was one of the best examples of "Vietnamization." During the last year of operation, instructors in the schools were able to train prospective students to the maximum comprehension levels required for direct entry into CONUS courses, making South Vietnam one of the few nations under the SATP that achieved this goal.

(2) Yet, even the ELTP had internal problems created primarily by interservice rivalry. The VNAF, even when student loads were reduced by 90%, still clung to its Nha Trang school and full staff. The VNAF school could have easily been absorbed by the RVNAFLS at Saigon at substantial manpower and cost savings, had VNAF accepted the DAO recommendation and agreed to turn assets and responsibility over to the ARVN. The title of the Saigon school, "RVNAFLS," implied a joint service school and indeed did accept students from all services. Yet as with nearly all other "RVNAF" schools, it had an exclusive ARVN staff. In addition, as student loads decreased, the RVNAFLS refused to substantially reduce its staff to make the officer instructors available for combat duty, a practice which was generally followed in all the RVNAF schools and training centers.

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c. Offshore training was the only system where the US retained any firm control because of the US dollars involved. The training was planned and programmed on a 16-month cycle. The program required a joint effort on the part of DAO/TMS and RVNAF, with the latter contributing student selection, security and medical assurance and biographical information. With continuous urging and pressure from TMS, the RVNAF generally met required suspenses and the system worked as prescribed. But it could have worked even better had it not been for personalities and the interservice rivalry identified earlier.

(1) Central Training Command (CTC), a suborganization of the Joint General Staff (JGS), theoretically was charged with responsibility for all RVNAF training. But CTC, like JGS, was a title only and not really a joint organization. It was an ARVN unit with only minimal representation from the other services. As a result, TMS never dealt with a consolidated training organization, but with four separate and distinct service training managers, plus the Ministry of National Defense (MOND). The latter, which became involved in management training during FY 74/75, was forced to deal directly with TMS, since CTC operated independently from the Ministry.

(2) Student selection by the RVNAF was always suspect. The vast preponderance of students selected for CONUS training came from the Saigon area. While large numbers of units were located in and near Saigon, the ratio of Saigon selectees versus other area selectees was heavily imbalanced. The development by TMS of computer runs of former students, both by alphabetical listing and by courses, showed other interesting facts. Substantial numbers of students returned to the CONUS for training two, three, four, or more. The computer runs were provided to the RVNAF and used by TMS to end the "professional student" concept and make off-shore training a more equitable procedure.

(3) Despite the minor problems and interservice rivalries noted above, the offshore training program was a viable, responsive, manageable system. It worked as well as it did for one primary reason -- TMS was a single multiservice unit capable of consolidating and coordinating the widely varied data and requirements from the independent Vietnamese services, DAO service divisions and the multitude of US commands and organizations involved in the SATP.

d. Contractor training was essentially a function of the DAO service/C-E divisions and was specialized according to the specific needs of the individual RVNAF. As such, it was monitored by the separate DAO divisions until TMS was directed by the DATT to assist in the monitoring in Jul 74. During the succeeding ten months,

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contractor training, except for production and spin-off OJT, was gradually phased out. It was the most expensive type of training provided to the RVN and the value of the training was never truly evaluated because of the wide dispersion of contractors throughout the country and the nebulous nature of the contracts, where training was often provided at the "best level of effort." That the VNAF, for example, was able to retain, and in some cases increase, aircraft OR rates after the majority of contractors departed, gives testimony that some of the contract training achieved the desired benefits. Yet it was the informal consensus of contractors, supported by TMS spot evaluations, that the overall contract training efforts did not achieve the desired goals, especially when cost of contracts was considered. However, any shortcomings or failures of contract training cannot be laid exclusively on the contractors' doorstep. Training lead time was inherently incompressible. Sophisticated systems thrust upon the RVNAF, difficult to comprehend and maintain under the best of peacetime circumstances, and an unresponsive supply system created additional problems. The generally indifferent and lethargic RVNAF attitude toward in-country training, particularly contractor provided, must share the blame for any resultant shortcomings. The training, in some form, was provided. How adequate to the need and how much was actually absorbed and put to use could only have been determined if the RVNAF had held long enough for a reasonable evaluation. Owing to the sudden and total defeat of the RVNAF, any further assessment would be unrealistic and dishonest.

e. The RVNAF "In-country Training System" was the end product of the efforts of the US military advisory groups in the 1960's and early 1970's. On the surface, looking at the maps that follow and listening to the many briefings given by the RVNAF, there is the illusion that a single system with component schools and training centers existed. In reality, this was not the case. Rather, four separate and distinct systems existed, each apparently patterned after the mold created for them by the US advisors. Further, ARVN divisions and VNAF air divisions operated nearly independently. The communication gaps between the systems and the resultant overlap and duplication of functions and training activities was obvious to even the most casual observer. As funds to support the in-country training became more scarce during FY 75, the gaps between the schools and centers became even more obvious as DAO/TMS initiated recommendations for consolidation were submitted to the JGS for consideration. With the exception of a late, minor effort to consolidate all communications-electronics schools in early 1975, all proposals and recommendations were summarily disregarded. In the end, as the enemy drove south, the same schools, created years earlier in separate US service images when money was no problem, were overrun or destroyed. See Figures 11-3,4,5 and 6.

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(1) The majority of schools and training centers, when evaluated by themselves, were adequate at least, with many such as the Ranger TC, the Marine Corps TC, the Armor School and Air Training Center at Nha Trang, in the "excellent" category. They had the capability to train in the physical motor skills they were designed to teach. However, many of the schools had the collateral requirement to create mental skills as well -- discipline, leadership, middle management, etc. A question exists whether these training facilities achieved significant success in this latter endeavor.

(2) Duplication of training in certain basic skills, common to all the services, was obvious and a source of constant concern for DAO officials because of the associated cost to maintain separate facilities and school staffs. Administrative, C-E, ELT and the first five weeks of basic military training were some of the most obvious areas of duplication. However, even with full knowledge of rapidly decreasing training funds and high-level pressure from DAO, the individual services would not consider or else delayed any serious attempts at consolidation. The primary reasons were noted earlier -- virtually all "RVNAF" training facilities were in reality ARVN facilities, including instructors, support staff and curriculum. Hesitancy by VNAF, VNN and VNMC to abdicate their personal schools was understandable, though not realistic, when the nation was struggling for its existence.

(3) Assignment to a school or training center was a lucrative and much sought tour. Most instructors and staff personnel spent many years in the same jobs. Virtually every school or training center staff was bloated, with student-instructor ratios as low as one-to-one, some even worse. In the case of one school, during a nine-month period no students were assigned; yet the 40-man staff remained. When student loads began to decrease in late 1974 as enemy pressure increased, staffs remained largely unchanged. In the early part of 1975, when it became obvious that maximum mobilization would be required, the staffs were not reduced to any appreciable extent.

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RECRUIT TRAINING OUTPUT AT NTC

JAN - MAR 75

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>JAN</u>	<u>FEB</u>	<u>MAR*</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Dong Da NTC	236	696		932
Lam Son NTC	779	562		1,341
Hoa Cam NTC	602	379		981
Phu Cat NTC	495	298		793
Pleiku NTC	000	252		252
Duc My NTC	912	930		1,842
Quang Trung NTC	2,068	2,499		4,567
Van Kiep NTC	276	492		768
Chi Lang NTC	2,170	1,124		3,294
Cao Lanh NTC	<u>000</u>	<u>522</u>		<u>522</u>
TOTAL	7,538	7,754		15,292
PROGRAMMED	20,000	14,600		34,600

\*No reports available.

Figure 11-1

11-17

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RECRUIT TRAINING OUTPUT AT DTC  
JAN - MAR 75

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>JAN</u>	<u>FEB</u>	<u>MAR*</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
1st DTC	145	000		145
2nd DTC	177	000		177
3rd DTC	000	000		000
22nd DTC	165	144		309
23rd DTC	63	150		213
5th DTC	332	381		713
18th DTC	616	262		878
25th DTC	143	289		432
7th DTC	000	110		110
9th DTC	298	445		743
21st DTC	<u>000</u>	<u>296</u>		<u>296</u>
TOTAL	1,939	2,077		4,016
PROGRAMED	1,463	1,463		2,926

\*No reports available.

Figure 11-2

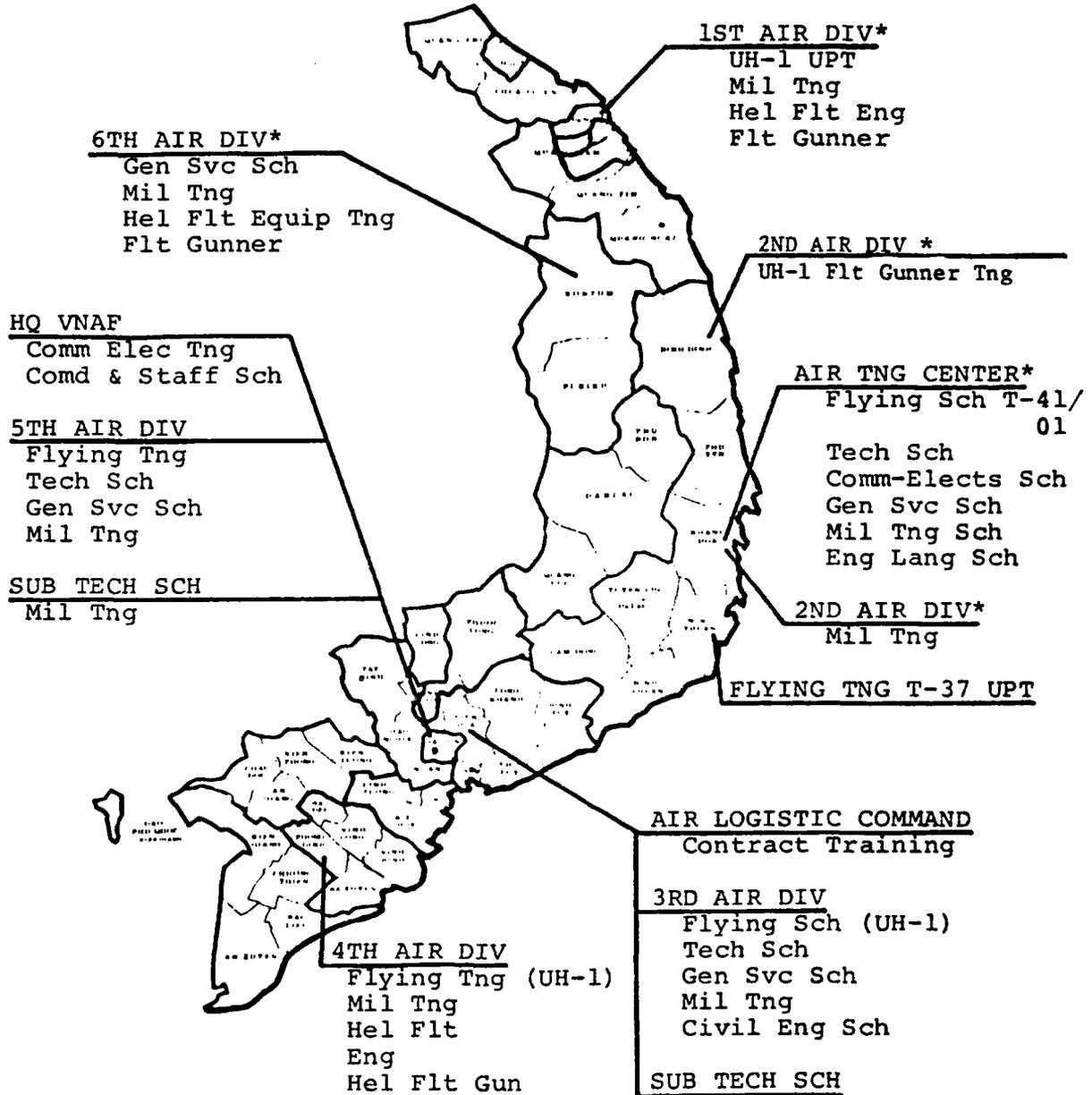
11-19

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VNAF

## TRAINING CENTERS AND SCHOOLS



\* Training Sites Lost or in Danger of Being Lost as of 31 Mar 75

Figure 11-3

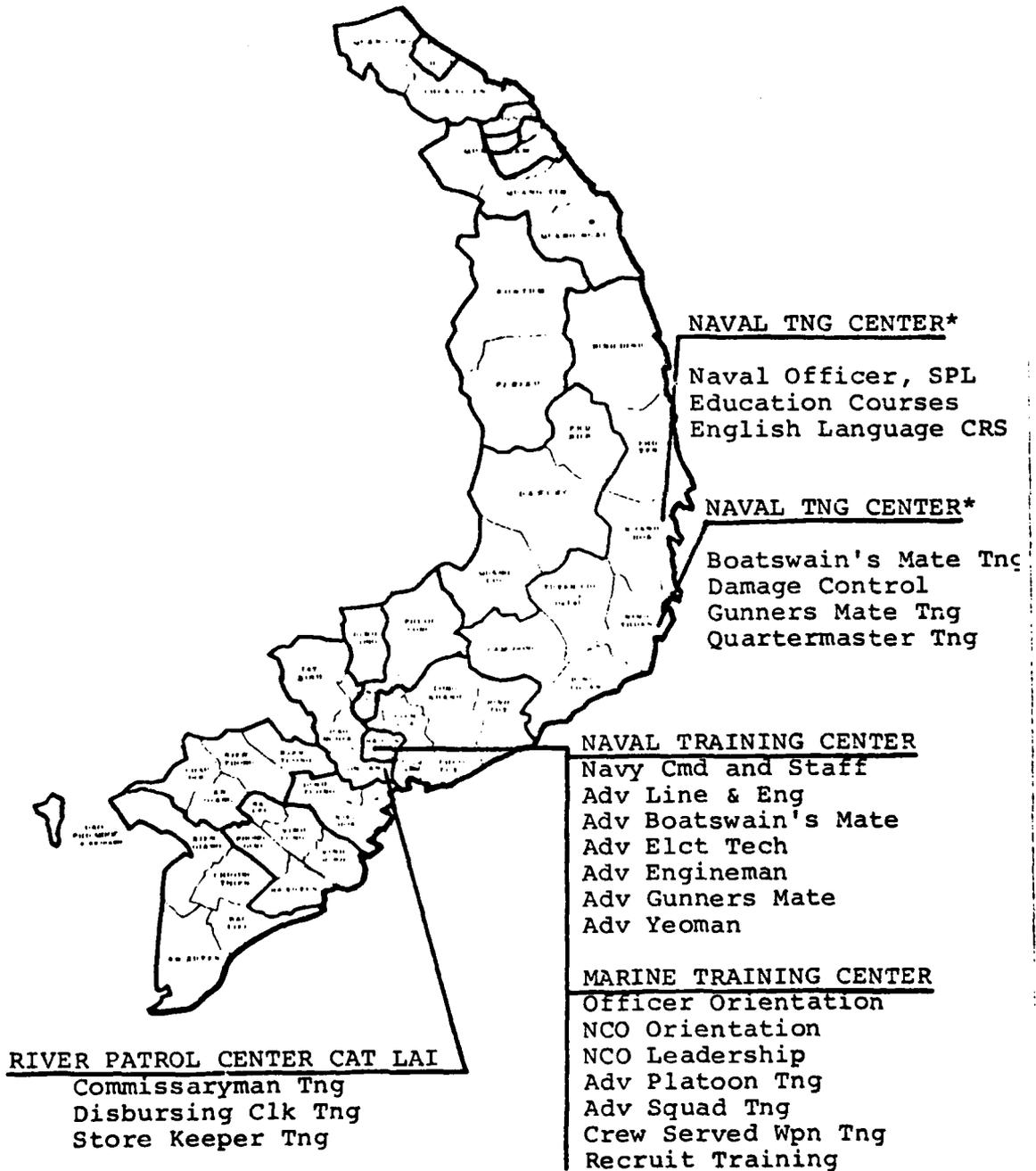
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VNN AND VNMC

TRAINING CENTERS AND SCHOOLS



\* Training Sites Lost or in Danger of Being Lost as of 31 Mar 75

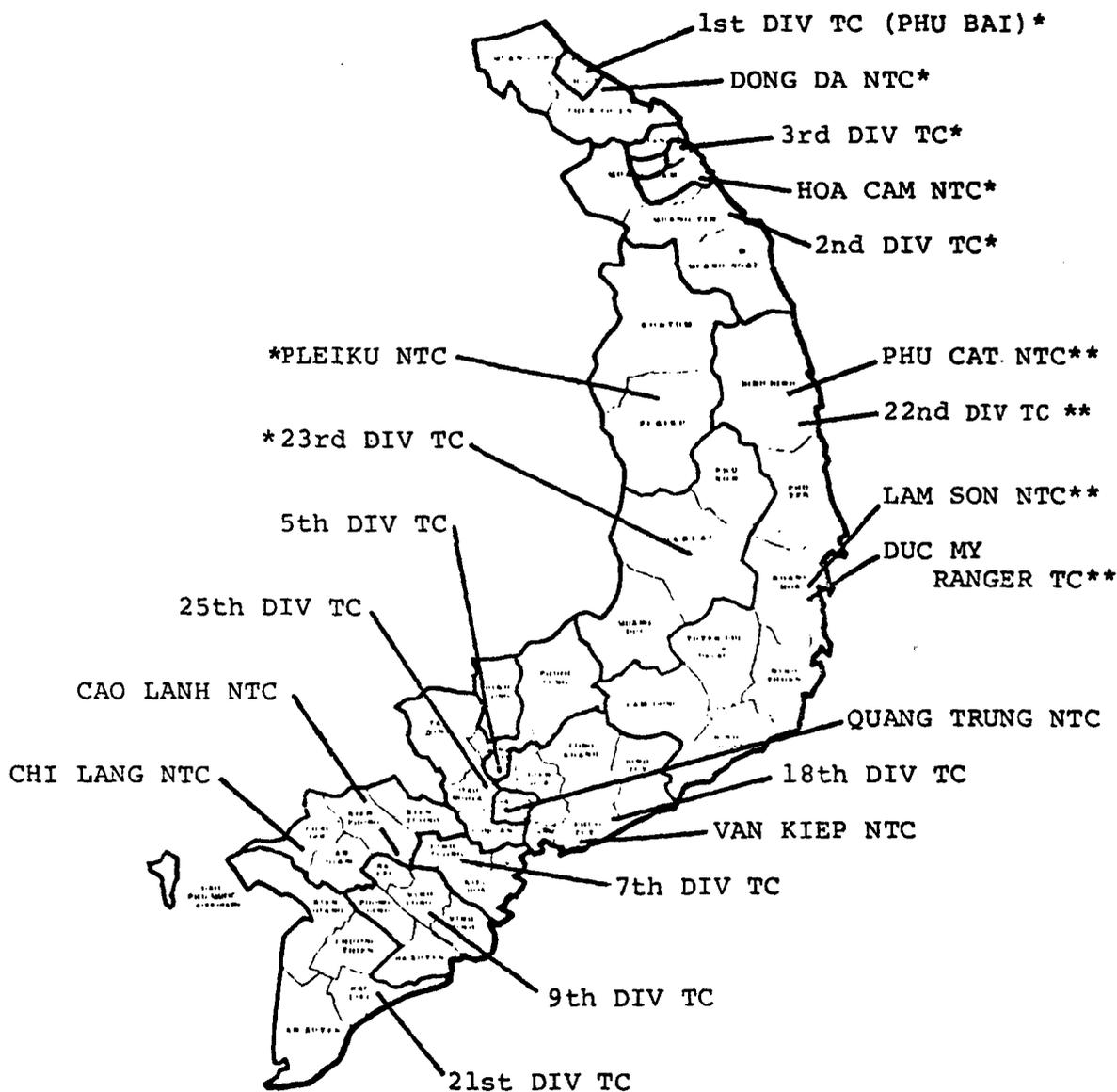
Figure 11-4

11-23

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## ARVN TRAINING CENTERS



\* Relocation Site Undetermined

\*\* Sites in Imminent Danger as of 31 Mar 75

Figure 11-5

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## ARVN SERVICE SCHOOLS

### LONG THANH (BEAR CAT):

Infantry School  
Armor School

### THU DUC:

QM School  
Band School  
Martial Art & Phy Sch  
Admin & Fin School  
AG School  
Mil Intel School

### PHU CUONG:

Engr School

### SAIGON:

Language School  
Mil Dog TC  
Mil Engr Tech School  
Mil Med School  
NDC  
Ord School  
POLWAR Cadre TC  
Soc Svc Tng School  
Trans School  
WAFC School

### PLEIKU: \*

Jr Mil Sch

### DUC MY: \*\*

Arty Sch

### NHA TRANG: \*\*

NCO Academy

### DA LAT: \*\*

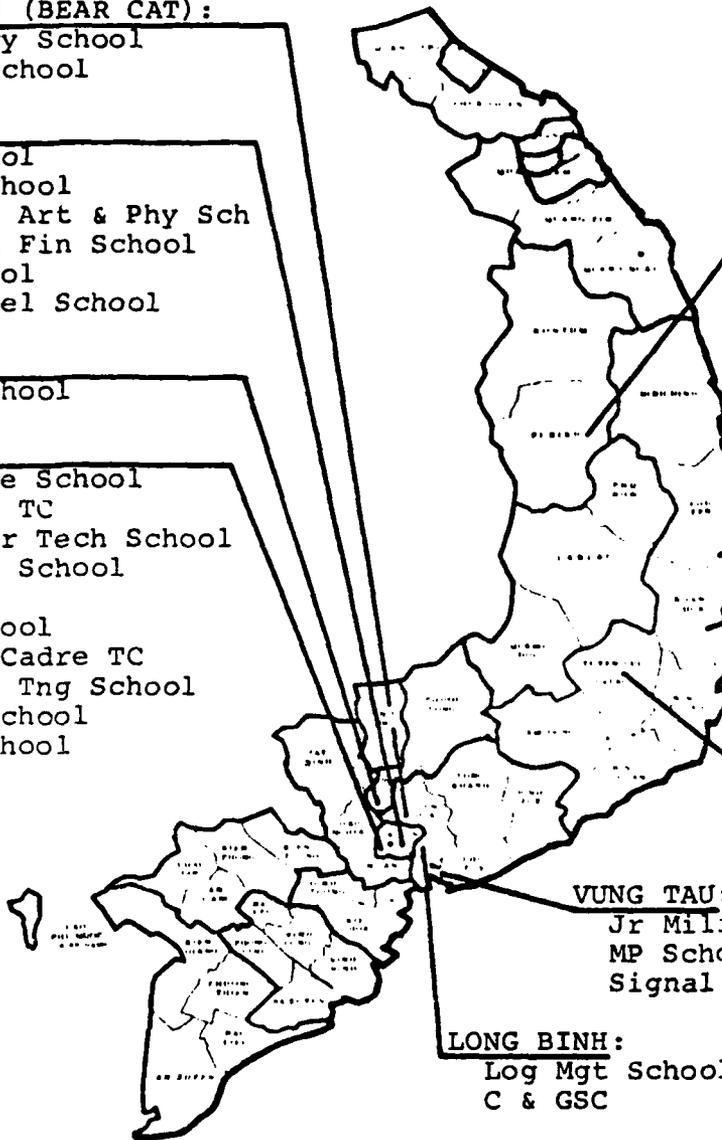
POLWAR Col  
VNMA

### VUNG TAU:

Jr Military School  
MP School  
Signal School

### LONG BINH:

Log Mgt School  
C & GSC



\* Relocation Site Undetermined

\*\* Sites in Imminent Danger as of 31 Mar 75

Figure 11-6

11-27

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## Chapter 12

### RVNAF PROGRAMS, PLANS AND MORALE

1. INTRODUCTION. In past assessments, Chapter 12 was a catchall chapter containing information, statistics and analyses about:

- a. Lines of Communications (LOC)
- b. Military Construction (MILCON)
- c. Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) 1975 Retirement Plan
- d. RVNAF Morale
- e. RVNAF Medical Evacuation (MEDEVAC)
- f. Chieu Hoi (Returnee) Program
- g. Terrorism
- h. Refugee Program

2. STATISTICS. No statistics covering the months since December 1974 are available and none will be forthcoming; throughout the period of this report, little raw data were received. There were three reasons for the lack of information:

a. The last quarter was a calendar year close-out which should have produced considerable timely information in early January 1975. In spite of this once-a-year opportunity to compile data, most RVNAF reports did not include December's figures in the final year-end statistics and many did not include November's.

b. Year-end reporting and compiling was followed closely by the Tet (Lunar New Year) festivities in early February. These holidays produced another three-week hiatus in collection and analysis of data by the Joint General Staff (JGS) and, hence, the JGS Liaison Section of the Defense Attache Office (DAO).

c. The North Vietnamese Army/Viet Cong (NVA/VC) spring offensive forced a redirection of effort by JGS which reduced interest in, or attention to, the topics formerly covered in this chapter.

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3. LINES OF COMMUNICATIONS. Land and water LOC were interdicted so rapidly and frequently following the fall of Military Regions (MR's) 1 and 2 that statistics on LOC usage were not compiled for this chapter. Some such statistics can be found in Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10.
4. MILITARY CONSTRUCTION (MILCON). There were numerous on-going construction programs throughout the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) until 26 April when all contracts were terminated.
5. RVNAF 1975 RETIREMENT PLAN. RVNAF was continuing to muster out and retire an average of 3,500 persons per month through the end of February. In March, national mobilization was ordered by the Ministry of National Defense (MOND), but was never fully implemented by JGS/RVNAF.
6. RVNAF MORALE. The desertion rate, one of the indicators of morale, remained fairly constant until March and April. The average for January and February 1975 was 17,500 incidents of desertion per month, the same average as for all of CY 74. In March 1975, the evacuation of MR's 1 and 2 eliminated any accurate measure of the desertion rate. A general propensity to desert did not manifest itself until the evacuations began.
7. RVNAF MEDICAL EVACUATION (MEDEVAC). The program was a continuing and effective one. No final statistics are available. The outstanding reaction and performance of VNAF rescue helicopter crews following the tragic crash of a US C-5A at Tan Son Nhut Air Base on 4 April 1975 was notable.
8. CHIEU HOI PROGRAM. No figures for this period are available.
9. TERRORISM. Terrorism was low during this reporting period, but precise figures on incidents are not available.
10. REFUGEE PROGRAM. Numbers of displaced persons increased gradually until the middle of March. After 15 March, the exodus from Da Nang and Pleiku to Nha Trang and Cam Ranh Bay, and later to Vung Tau and Phu Quoc Island, created a confused refugee situation which was never resolved.
11. CONCLUSION. The reporting period covered by this final assessment saw the demise of all RVNAF programs with the surrender of the Government of Vietnam on 30 April 1975.

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## CHAPTER 13

### JGS COMMAND AND CONTROL

1. (C) COMMAND AND CONTROL. The Defense Attache Office has in the past shown the interrelationship between various staff elements within the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF). The weakness of the system and lack of control by the Joint General Staff (JGS) has been pointed out in previous assessments. The final NVA offensive amplified the lack of control by the JGS. There was a complete lack of knowledge at the working staff level of the JGS as to what the situation was at any given time. Most information that was received by the JGS/Joint Operation Center (JOC) came in so long after the action that it was of very little value. There was an attempt to correct this by sending a liaison team from the JOC to Da Nang only to have the team "Missing in Action" within 24 hours.
2. (C) CENTRAL LOGISTIC COMMAND. This assessment is devoted to the Central Logistic Command (CLC) and Telecommunication Command (J6). The CLC exercised, comparatively, the most positive control of all the J sections at all echelons within the RVNAF. The CLC was in the process of reorganization to further improve the system. The final organization, with known changes, is depicted at Figure 13-1. There were additional changes pending, but not accomplished. The most significant final changes were as follows:
  - a. The Ammunition Section was transferred from the Ordnance Department and made a service within CLC. This service was responsible for all logistic transactions pertaining to ammunition and related items, to include maintaining minimum safe stock levels.
  - b. The Assistant for Finance and Audit had just been added to the CLC staff. This office, with an audit team, was responsible to the Chief of CLC for all financial and audit matters pertaining to RVNAF logistics. The Finance Service, depicted at Figure 13-1, was scheduled to be transferred to the RVNAF Office of Finance.
  - c. There was a proposal pending which would transfer the Petroleum Oil and Lubricants (POL) Branch from the Quartermaster Department and make it a service within CLC.
  - d. The Army Supply Center (ASC) had consolidated its efforts and was responsible for the issue of supplies (except ammunition and POL) to all authorized RVNAF customers. Authorized customers included the repair depots, support battalions of the combat divisions,

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direct support groups, and the Navy and Air Force for common items. Those items that are peculiar only to the Navy and Air Force were issued by their respective supply centers.

3. (C) RVNAF LOGISTIC CHANNELS. The RVNAF logistic channels are depicted at Figure 13-2. There were only two area logistic commands (ALC) remaining of the five that existed when the final offensive began in early March. The two remaining ALC's (3d and 4th) are depicted at Figures 13-3 and 13-4, respectively.

4. (C) JGS J6 AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMAND.

a. The Chief of J6 and Telecom Command operated within guidelines determined by the Chief of JGS, Chief of Staff/JGS, and the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations. The chart at Figure 13-5 depicts the J6 and Telecom Command relationship with JGS, Corps G6, signal battalions, and elements under direct command of J6 and Telecom Command.

b. The general mission of JGS J6 and Telecom Command included the following:

- (1) Responsible for all communications and electronics policies, management, studies, research, and plans.
- (2) Provide direction to all RVNAF signal units.
- (3) Figure 13-6 outlines the JGS/J6 and Telecom Command organization.

c. The JGS Signal Battalion (Figure 13-7), Headquarters and Headquarters Company Area Signal Group (Figure 13-8), Area Signal Operation Battalion (Figure 13-9), were elements under the direct command of J6 and Telecom Command to accomplish the mission of providing RVNAF units with communication and electronics support. The corps and infantry division signal battalion organizations, under J6 and Telecom Command for technical supervision, are shown at Figure 13-10 and 13-11, respectively.

d. The JGS, corps and infantry division signal battalion communication diagrams are shown at Figures 13-12, 13-13, and 13-14. Each level of command exercised internal communication and external command and control through the facilities provided by the signal battalions.

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# ORGANIZATION CHART JGS/CENTRAL LOGISTIC COMMAND (JGS/CLC)

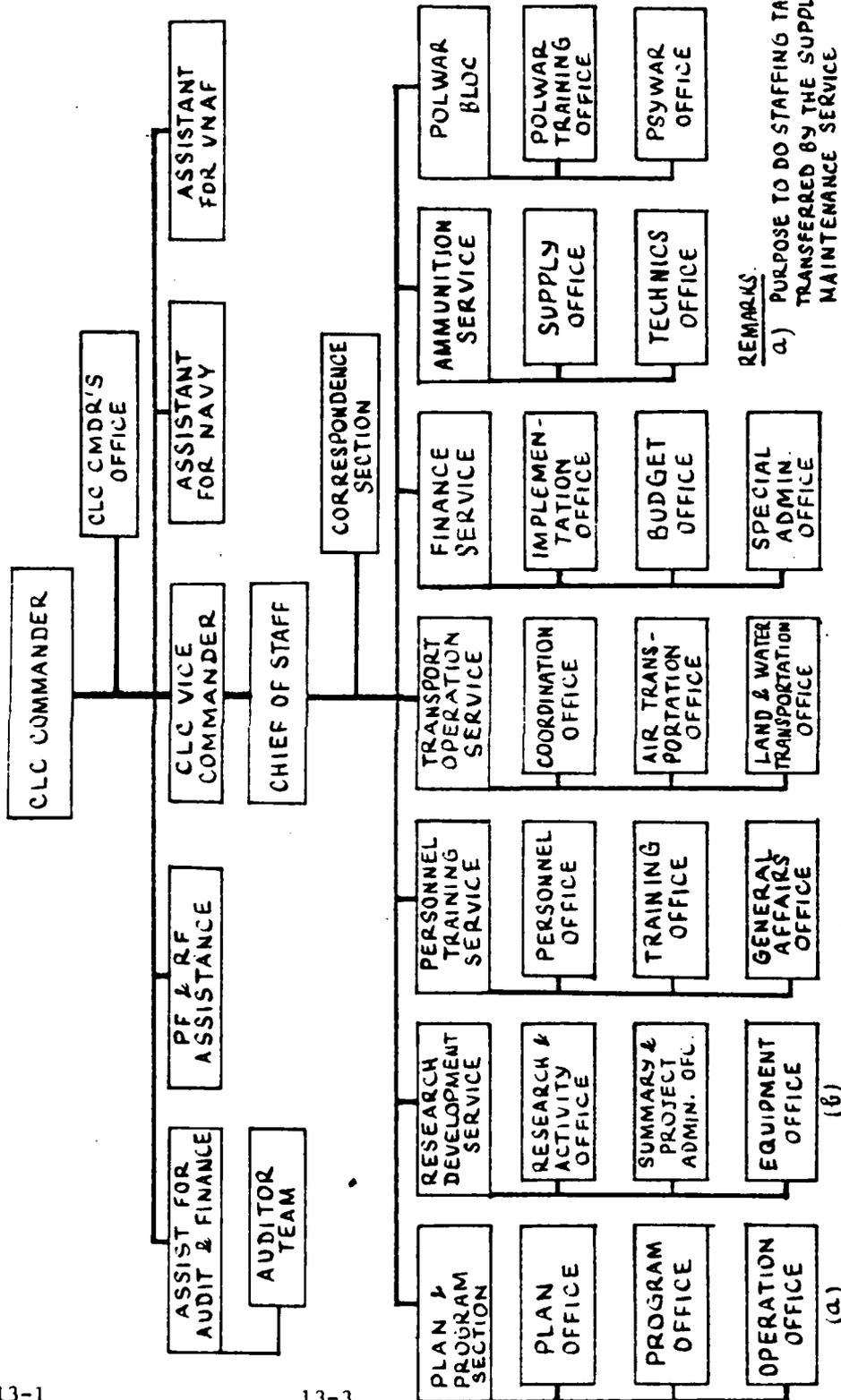
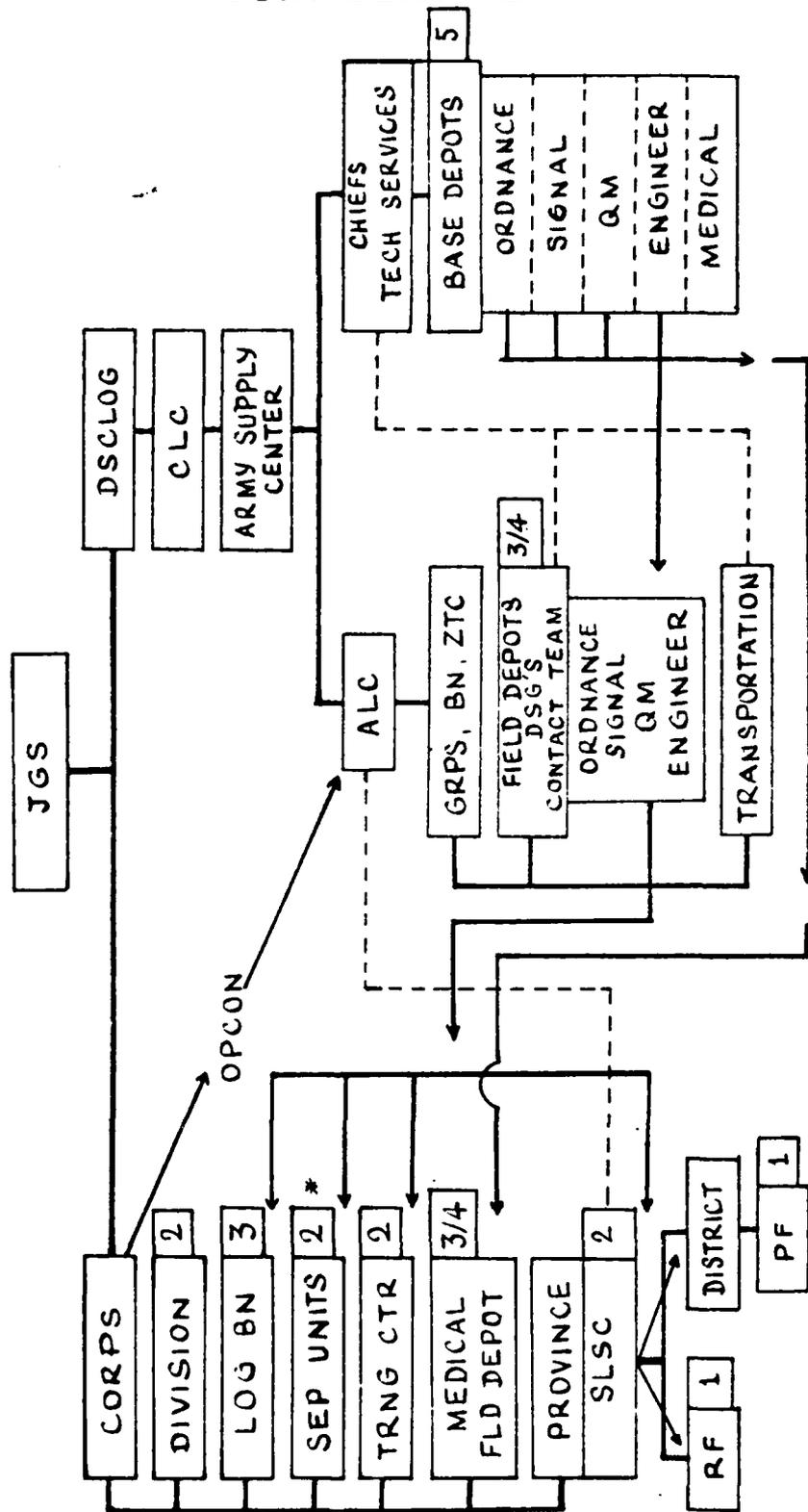


Figure 13-1

13-3

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# RVNAF LOGISTICS CHANNELS



LEGEND:  
 ——— COMMAND CHANNELS  
 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 MAINTENANCE ECHELON  
 \* INCLUDES COMMON ITEMS (AF & NAVY)  
 - - - TECHNICAL SUPERVISION

Figure 13-2

13-5

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ORGANIZATION OF THE 3rd LOGISTICAL COMMAND

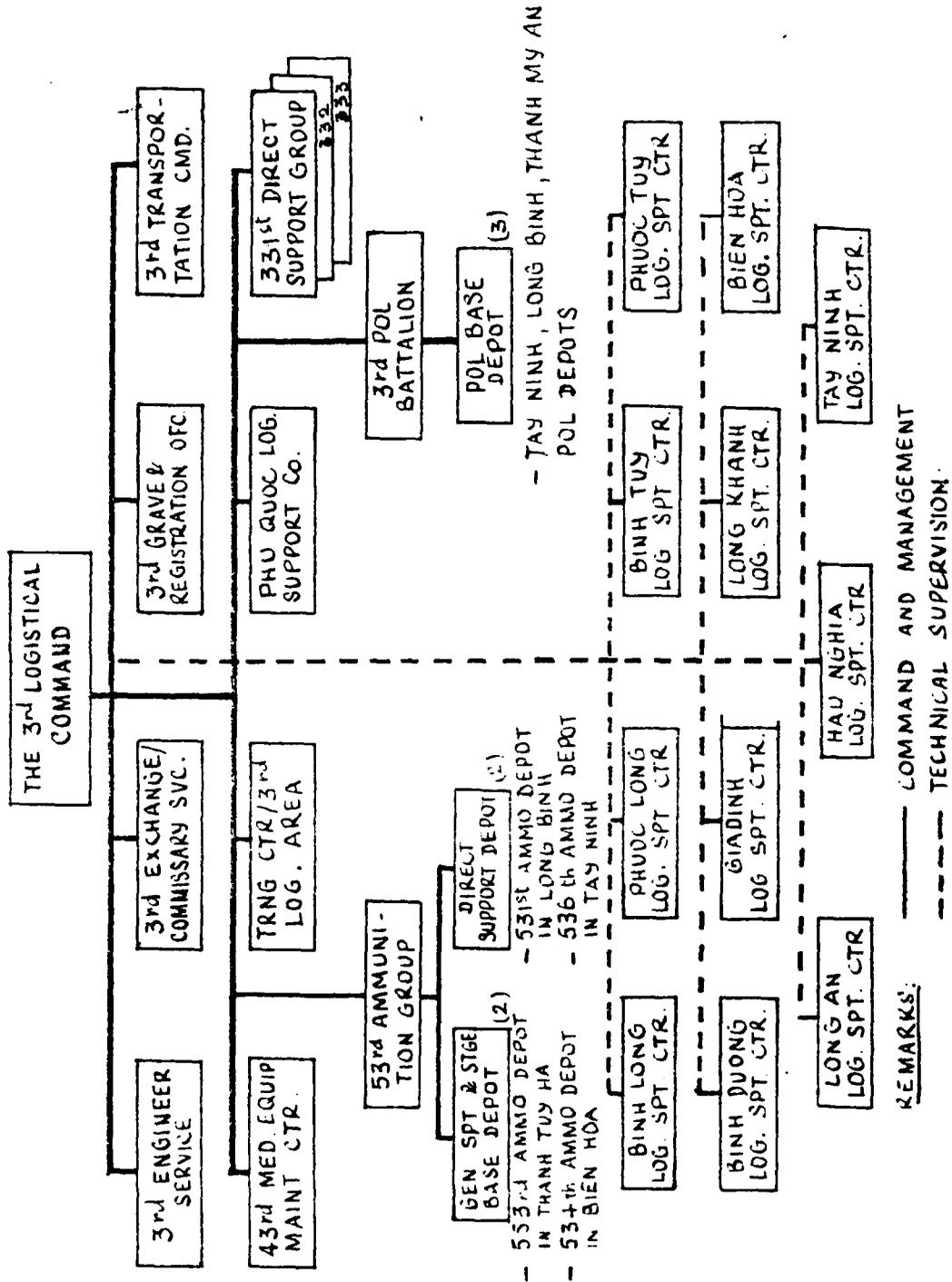


Figure 13-3

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ORGANIZATION OF THE 4th LOGISTICAL COMMAND

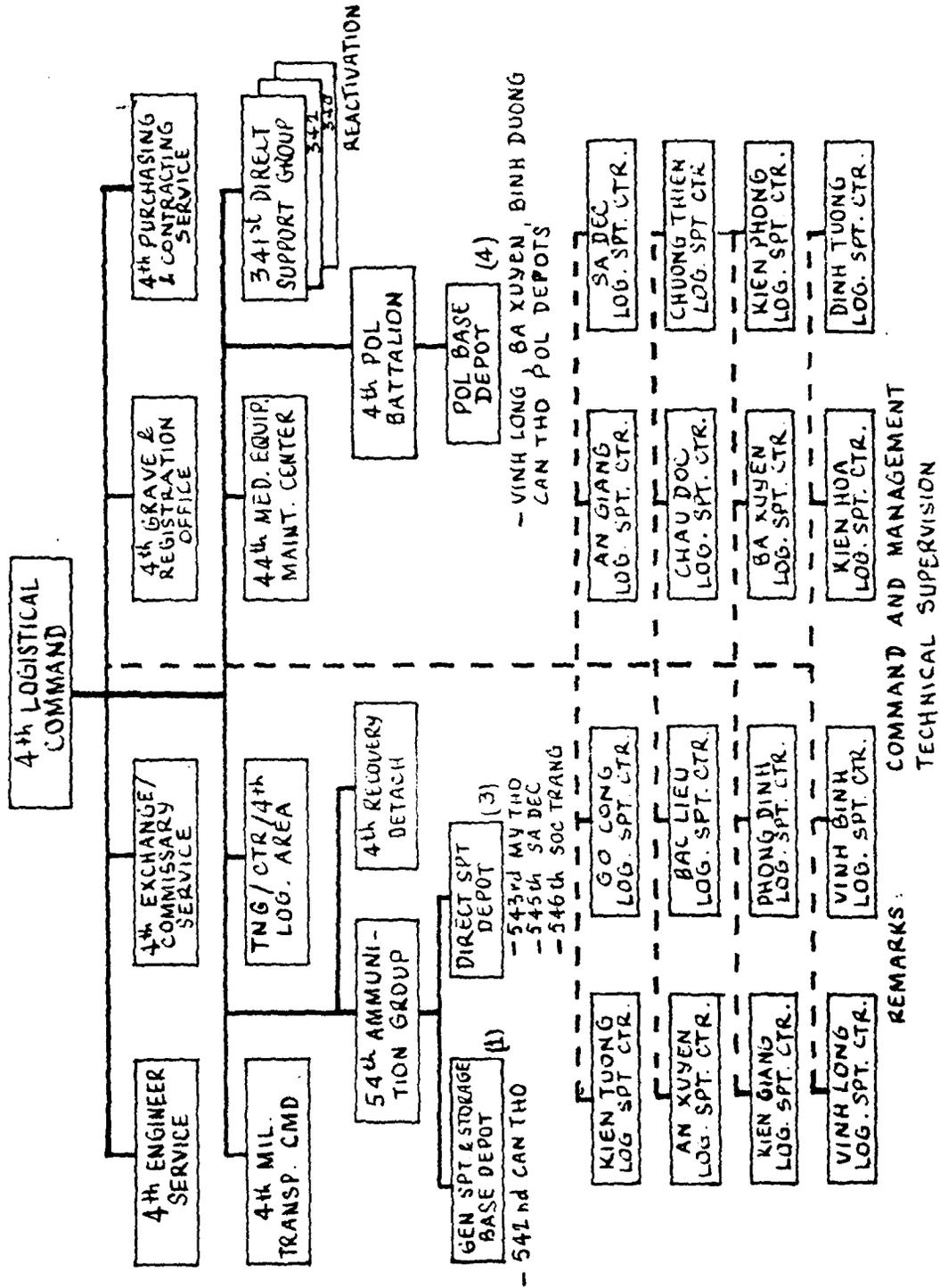
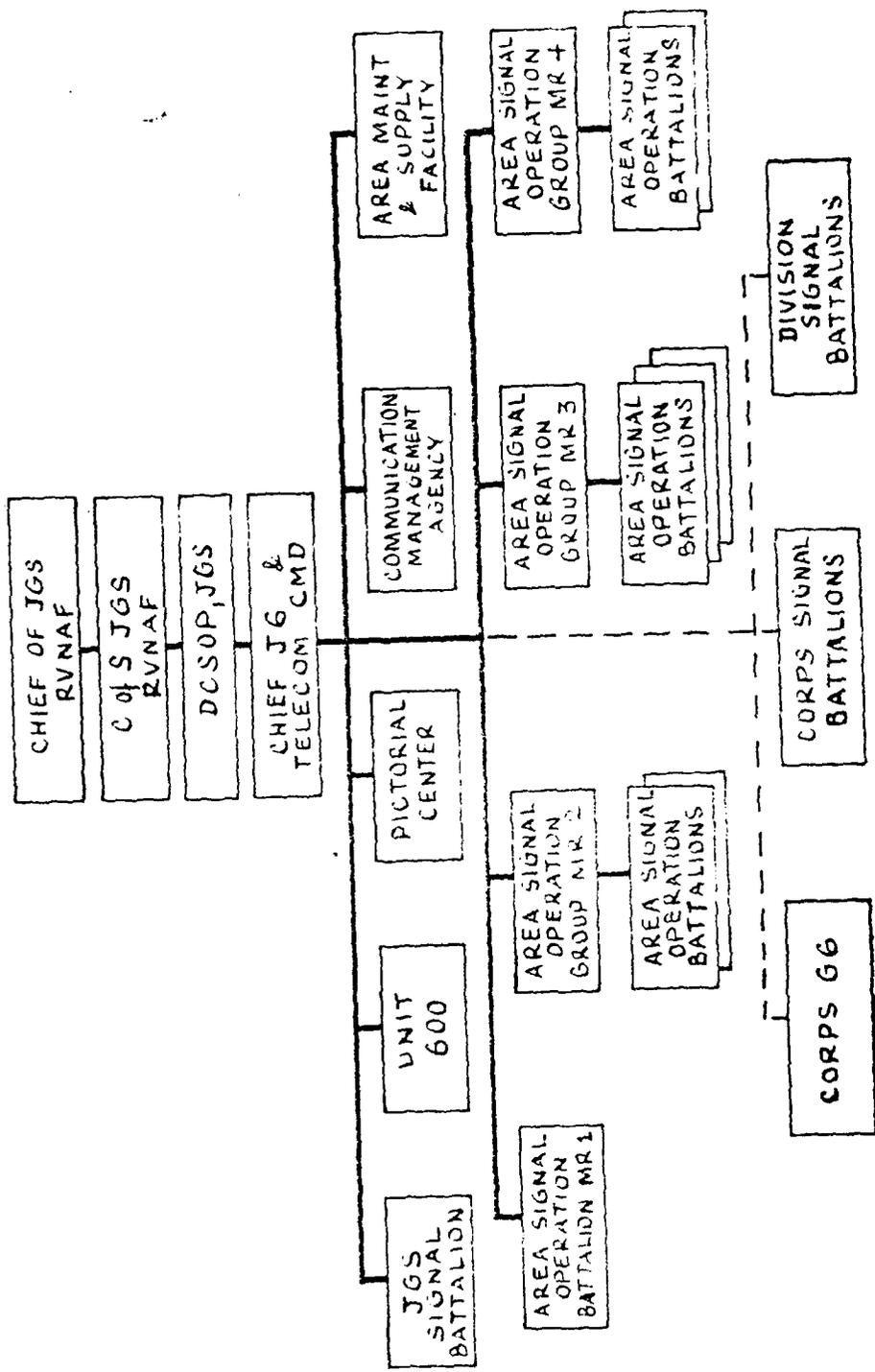


Figure 13-4

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COMMAND AND CONTROL



COMMAND TECHNICAL SUPERVISION - - - - -

NOTE: UNIT 600 STORE, ISSUE AND DISPOSE OF ALL RVNAF COMMUNICATIONS SECURITY MATERIAL

Figure 13-5

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# JGS/J6 & TELECOM ORGANIZATION CHART

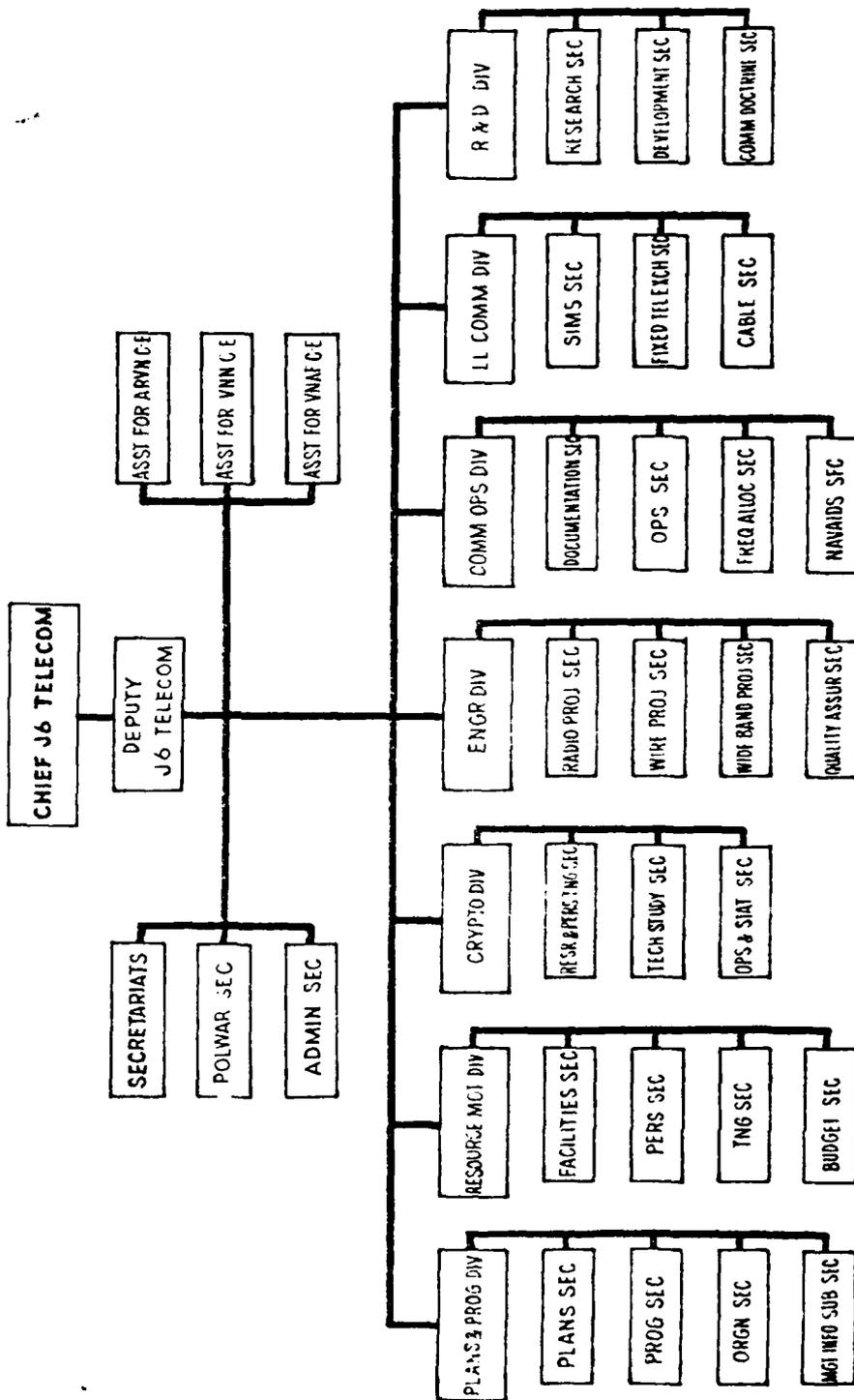


Figure 13-6

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CONFIDENTIAL

JGS SIGNAL BATTALION ORGANIZATION CHART

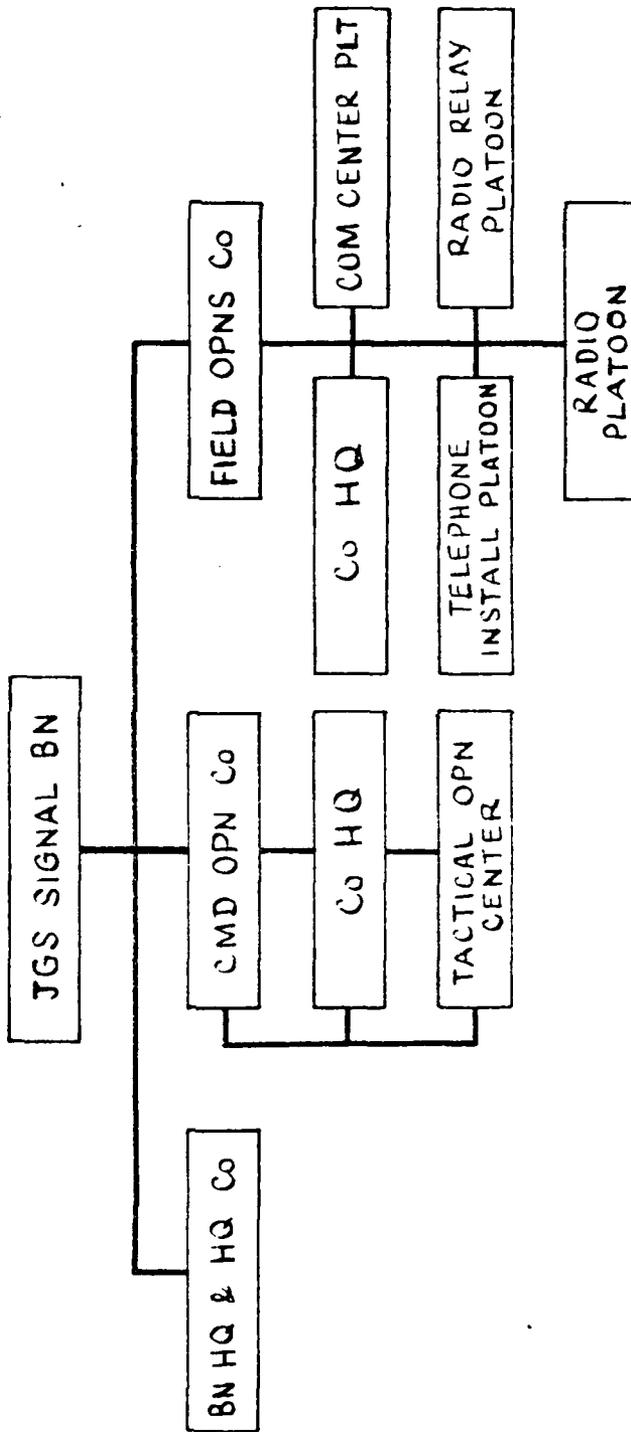


Figure 13-7

13-15

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

HEADQUARTERS & HEADQUARTERS COMPANY AREA SIGNAL GROUP ORGANIZATION CHART

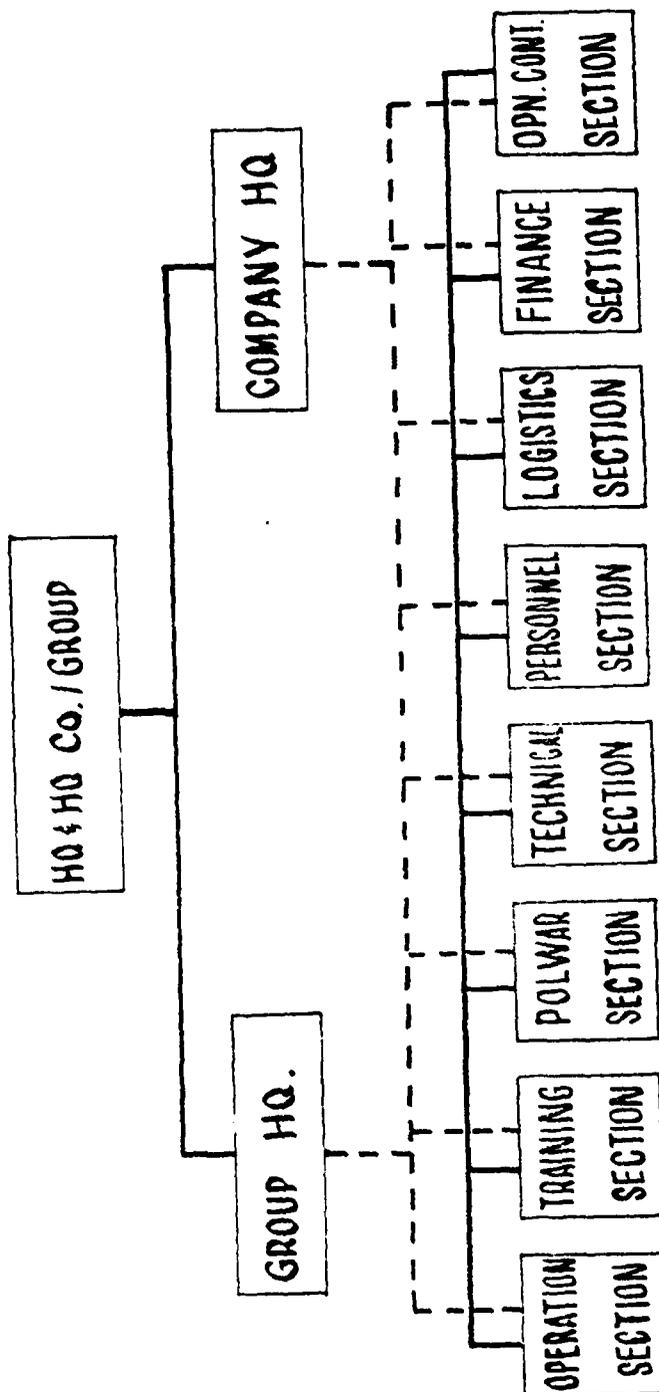


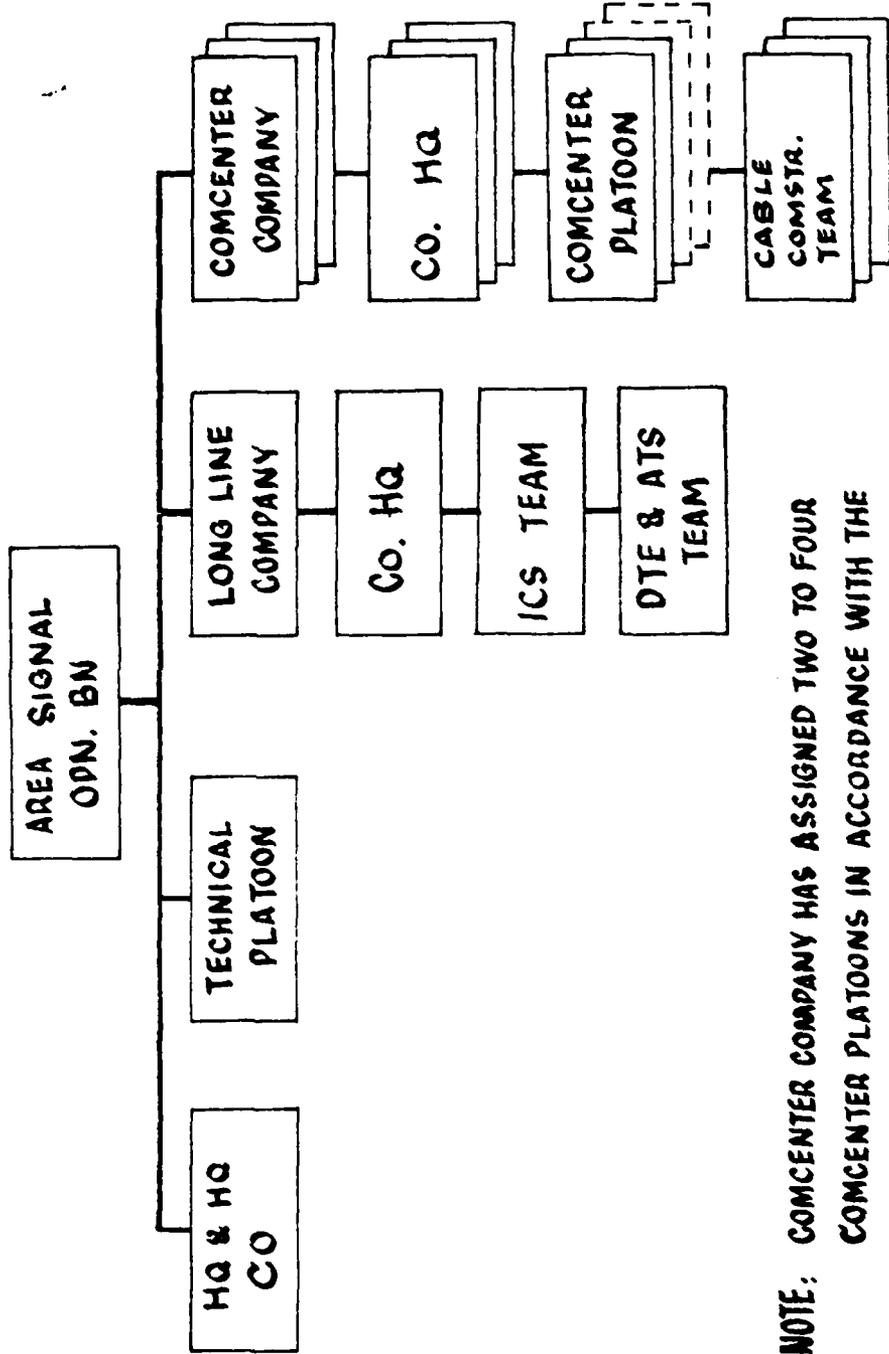
Figure 13-8

13-17

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

AREA SIGNAL OPERATION BATTALION ORGANIZATION CHART



NOTE: COMCENTER COMPANY HAS ASSIGNED TWO TO FOUR COMCENTER PLATOONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE MISSION ASSIGNED.

Figure 13-9

CONFIDENTIAL

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**CORPS SIGNAL BATTALION ORGANIZATION CHART**

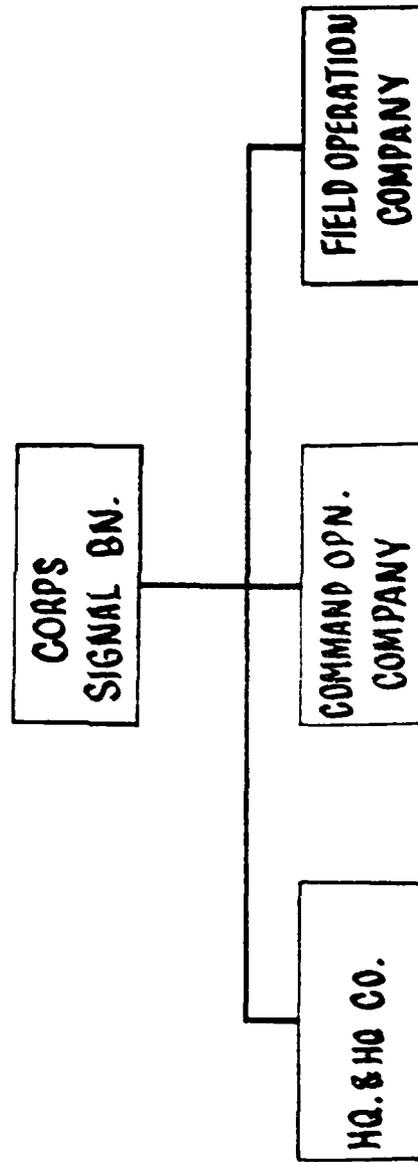


Figure 13-10

13-21

**CONFIDENTIAL**

CONFIDENTIAL

SIGNAL BATTALION/INFANTRY DIVISION ORGANIZATION CHART

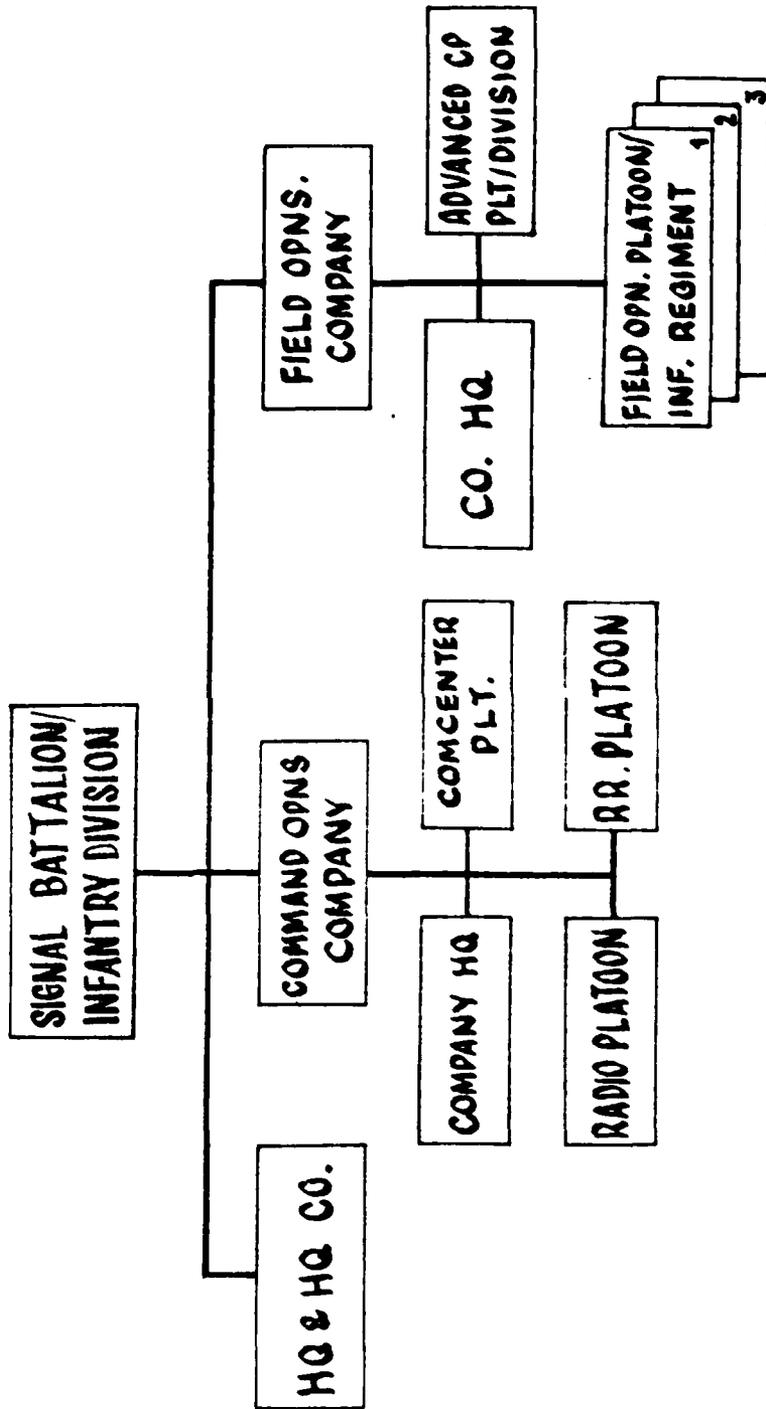


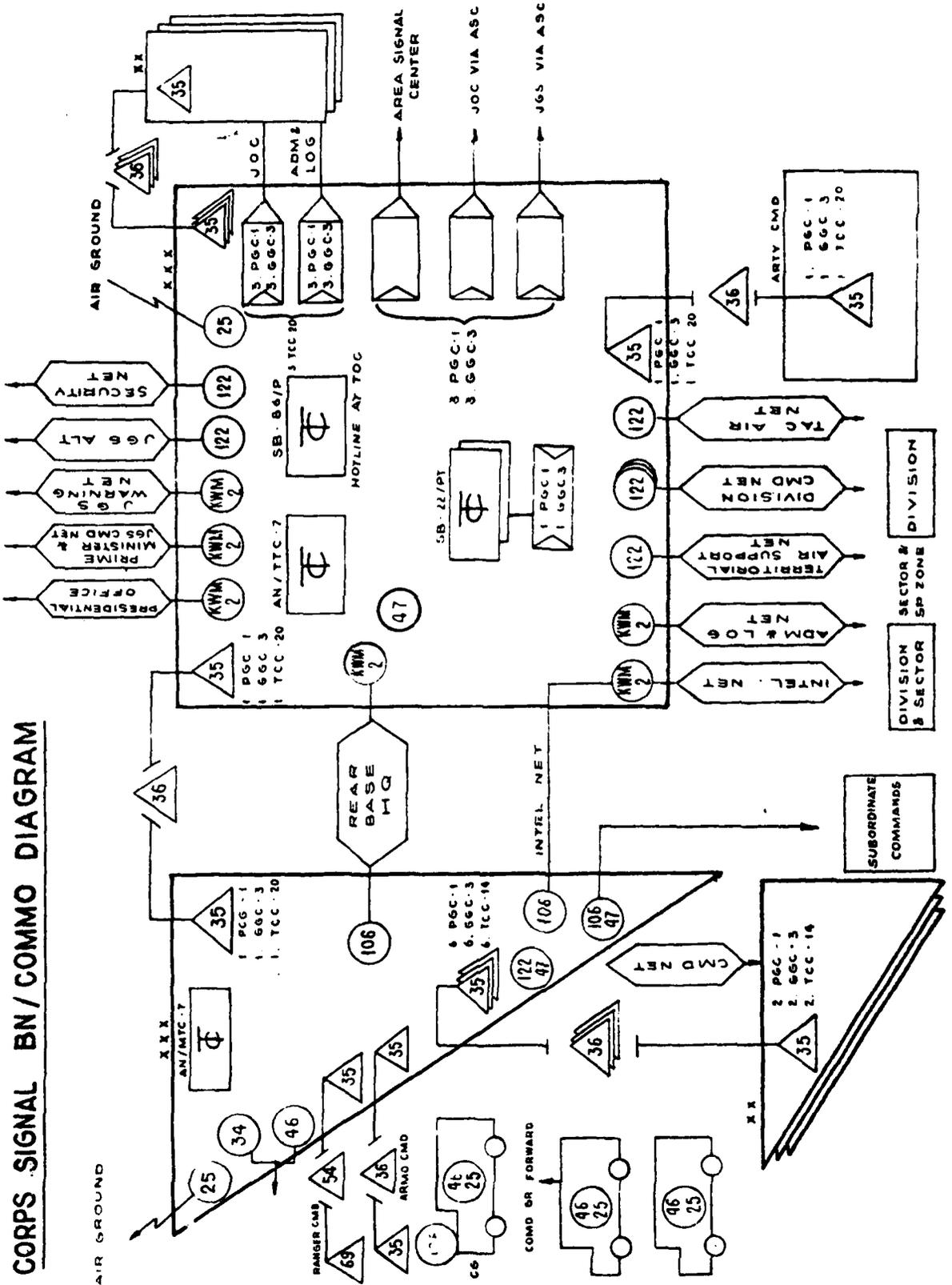
Figure 13-11

13-23

CONFIDENTIAL



CONFIDENTIAL



CORPS SIGNAL BN/COMMO DIAGRAM

Figure 13-13

CONFIDENTIAL



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## CHAPTER 14

DAO DISTINGUISHED VISITORS1. JANUARY 1975:

<u>DATE(S)</u>	<u>DISTINGUISHED VISITOR</u>	<u>TITLE</u>
1-14 Jan 75	Brigadier General James M. Thompson	Deputy Director for Estimates, Defense Intelligence Agency
5-7 Jan 75	Colonel John P. Vollmer	Commander, Joint Casualty Resolution Center
6-8 Jan 75	Honorable Carlyle Maw	Under Secretary of State for Security Assistance
	Major General James A. Grimsley	Office Secretary of Defense, International Security Affairs
	Mr. Dick Finch	Staff Member
	Miss Sarah J. Littlefield	Staff Member
	Colonel James M. Mangum	Commander in Chief, Pacific, Representative
6-8 Jan 75	Captain D. W. Nordberg, United States Navy	Chief, Fleet Coordinat- ing Group
7-11 Jan 75	Mr. Don L. Lynch	Staff Member, Senate Armed Services Committee

# UNCLASSIFIED

<u>DATE(S)</u>	<u>DISTINGUISHED VISITOR</u>	<u>TITLE</u>
	Colonel Harry P. Dunn	Military Escort
7 Jan-7 Feb 75	Mr. M.A. Meling	Chief, Pacific Audit Division, Office Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Audit)
8-10 Jan 75	Colonel William A. Meikle	Headquarters, United States Support Activities Group
9 Jan 75	Lieutenant General John J. Burns	Commander, United States Support Activities Group/7th Air Force
	Major General Ira A. Hunt, Jr.	Deputy Commander, United States Support Activities Group
9-10 Jan 75	Colonel John P. Vollmer	Commander, Joint Casualty Resolution Center
11 Jan 75	General David C. Jones	Chief of Staff, United States Air Force
	Major General C. A. Gabriel	Staff Member
	Colonel J.L. Piotrowski	Staff Member

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<u>DATE(S)</u>	<u>DISTINGUISHED VISITOR</u>	<u>TITLE</u>
13-14 Jan 75	Honorable Sam Nunn	United States Senator
	Mr. Don L. Lynch	Staff Member
	Mr. Francis J. Sullivan	Staff Member
	Colonel Harry P. Dunn	Military Escort
14-16 Jan 75	Brigadier General James D. Hittle, United States Marine Corps (Retired)	Consultant to President of Overseas Private Investment Corporation
17-23 Jan 75	Colonel Albert N. Weidhas, Jr.	Commander, Detachment K, 500th Military Intelligence Group
21 Jan 75	Rear Admiral Hugh A. Benton	J4, Commander in Chief, Pacific
21-22 Jan 75	Major General Eugene L. Hudson	Director, Logistic Plans and Programs, Office, Chief of Staff, Air Force
	Major General George Rhodes	Chief of Staff, Air Force Logistics Command
	Brigadier General Jack W. Waters	Deputy Chief of Staff, Logistics, Pacific Air Force

14-3

# UNCLASSIFIED

# UNCLASSIFIED

<u>DATE(S)</u>	<u>DISTINGUISHED VISITOR</u>	<u>TITLE</u>
	Colonel William L. Stringer	Staff Member
	Colonel E.R. Ringman	Staff Member
	Mr. Paul Tollestrup	Staff Member
	Colonel Nicholas Howell	Staff Member
	Colonel Delbert E. Smith	Headquarters, United States Support Activities Group
22-25 Jan 75	Rear Admiral Robert C. Laning	Surgeon, Commander in Chief, Pacific
	Colonel James E. McArthur	Staff Member
22-29 Jan 75	Mr. Kenneth L. Riner	Assistant Regional Manager, San Francisco Region, Defense Contract Audit Agency
24-27 Jan 75	Mr. Amos A. Jordan	Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, International Security Affairs
	Colonel Lee A. Denson	Military Assistant
28 Jan 75	Colonel Kenneth H. Kennedy	Commander, Thailand Regional Exchange

14-4

# UNCLASSIFIED

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<u>DATE(S)</u>	<u>DISTINGUISHED VISITOR</u>	<u>TITLE</u>
31 Jan 75	Major General Robert C. Hixon	Commander, United States Military Assistance Command, Thailand
	Colonel Paul F. Braim	Staff Member
2. <u>FEBRUARY 1975</u>		
2-3 Feb 75	Rear Admiral John R. Fisher	Commander, Pacific Naval Facilities Engineering Command
4-6 Feb 75	Mr. Dudley J. Clapp	Military Sealift Command
	Captain William A. Chadwick, United States Navy	Staff Member
	Mr. John W. Kramer	Staff Member
	Colonel Thomas R. Ostrom	Staff Member
4-6 Feb 75	Rear Admiral Hugh A. Benton	J4, Commander in Chief, Pacific

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<u>DATE(S)</u>	<u>DISTINGUISHED VISITOR</u>	<u>TITLE</u>
4-7 Feb 75	Captain D.D. Ruebsamen, United States Navy	Commander, Military Sealift Command, Far East
5 Feb 75	Colonel Thomas Burkhalter	Headquarters, Military Assistance Command, Thailand
5 Feb 75	Mr. Donnelly A. Sohlin	United States Agency for International Development, Phnom Penh
5-7 Feb 75	Major General Ira A. Hunt, Jr.	Deputy Commander, United States Support Activities Group
	Colonel Delbert E. Smith	Staff Member
6 Feb 75	Lieutenant General John J. Burns	Commander, United States Support Activities Group/7th Air Force
11 Feb-2 Mar 75	Sir Robert Thompson	British Author
19-22 Feb 75	Colonel James A. Diddle	Office, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Regional Programs), Program Analysis and Evaluation

14-6

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<u>DATE(S)</u>	<u>DISTINGUISHED VISITOR</u>	<u>TITLE</u>
20 Feb-3 Mar 75	Colonel Leo M. Brandt	Office, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)
	Colonel Laurence L. Ropka, Jr.	Staff Member
20-22 Feb 75	Colonel Reginald W. Hall	Headquarters, Department of the Army
21-22 Feb 75	Mr. Franklin P. Shaw	Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Regional Programs)
	Mr. Frank A. Tapparo	Staff Member
23 Feb 75- Indefinite	Colonel Walter F. Caldwell	United States Support Activities Group
27 Feb-3 Mar 75	Honorable Dewey F. Bartlett	United States Senator
	Honorable Paul J. McCloskey, Jr.	Member of Congress
	Honorable John J. Flynt, Jr.	Member of Congress
	Honorable Donald M. Fraser	Member of Congress
	Honorable Bella S. Abzug	Member of Congress

14-7

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DISTINGUISHED  
VISITOR

TITLE

DATE(S)

Honorable Millicent Fenwick	Member of Congress
Honorable William D. Chappell, Jr.	Member of Congress
Honorable John P. Murtha	Member of Congress
Honorable Philip C. Habib	Assistant Secretary of State
Mr. Eric C. Von Marbod	Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)
Mr. Robert K. Walthus	White House Representative
Mr. Stephen Bryan	Staff Delegate
Mr. David Russell	Staff Delegate
Mr. Robert B. Boettcher	Staff Delegate
Mr. John J. Brady	Staff Delegate
Mr. John H. Sullivan	Staff Delegate
Miss Barbara Giaimo	House Foreign Affairs Committee Staff
Mr. John Helble	Special Assistant to Assistant Secretary Habib
Mr. Harvey Buffalo	State Department Administrative Bureau
Mr. Lars Hydle	State Department Escort Officer

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<u>DATE(S)</u>	<u>DISTINGUISHED VISITOR</u>	<u>TITLE</u>
	Mr. Kenneth Quinn	State Department Escort Officer
	Mr. Frank Scotton	United States Informa- tion Agency Escort Officer
3. <u>MARCH 1975:</u>		
1-6 Mar 75	Mr. Robert C. Moffit	Counsel, Defense Property Disposal Service
4-7 Mar 75	Honorable Steven D. Symms	Member of Congress
4-26 Mar 75	Mr. C.K. Lammers	Chief, Pacific Audit Division, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Audit)
5-7 Mar 75	Major General Ira A. Hunt, Jr.	Deputy Commander, United States Support Activities Group
6-7 Mar 75	Colonel Louis A. Daigneau	Military Equipment Delivery Team, Phnom Penh
8 Mar 75	Lieutenant General John J. Burns	Commander, United States Support Activities Group/ 7th Air Force

14-9

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<u>DATE(S)</u>	<u>DISTINGUISHED VISITOR</u>	<u>TITLE</u>
11-14 Mar 75	Mr. William D. Carter	Vice President, Operations Division, COSMOS Engineering Incorporation
13 Mar 75	Lieutenant General W.W. Marshall	Vice Commander in Chief, Pacific Air Force
	Brigadier General Jack W. Waters	Deputy Chief of Staff, Logistics, Pacific Air Force
	Brigadier General Alonzo J. Walter	Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff, Plans and Operations for Operations, Pacific Air Force
14-16 Mar 75	Major General John R.D. Cleland	Vice Director for Operations, Office Joint Chiefs of Staff
17-18 Mar 75	Colonel Kenneth H. Kennedy	Commander, Thailand Regional Exchange
19-20 Mar 75	Colonel Jack L. Keaton	United States Aviation Support Command
20-25 Mar 75	Major General Ira A. Hunt, Jr.	Deputy Commander, United States Support Activities Group
19-25 Mar 75	Mr. Frank A. Sato	Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Audit)

14-10

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<u>DATE(S)</u>	<u>DISTINGUISHED VISITOR</u>	<u>TITLE</u>
27 Mar-4 Apr 75	General Frederick C. Weyand	Chief of Staff United States Army
	Mr. Eric C. Von Marbod	Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)
28 Mar-2 Apr 75	Colonel Richard J. Womack	Commander, United States Army Procurement Branch
	Mr. W. J. Curley	Staff Member
	Mr. G. Uyeshiro	Staff Member
4. <u>APRIL 1975</u>		
1-29 Apr 75	Rear Admiral Hugh A. Benton	On-scene Representative, Commander in Chief, Pacific
1-29 Apr 75	Rear Admiral Owen Oberg	On-scene Representative, Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet
4 Apr 75	Major General Ira A. Hunt, Jr.	Deputy Commander, United States Support Activities Group
10 Apr 75	Major General Ira A. Hunt, Jr.	Deputy Commander, United States Support Activities Group
13 Apr 75	Brigadier General Richard E. Carey	Assistant Wing Commander 1st Marine Aircraft Wing
19 Apr 75	Admiral Noel Gayler	Commander in Chief, Pacific

14-11

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<u>DATE(S)</u>	<u>DISTINGUISHED VISITOR</u>	<u>TITLE</u>
19 Apr 75	Lieutenant General John J. Burns	Commander, United States Support Activities Group/ 7th Air Force
19 Apr 75	Major General F. C. Lang	J-3, Commander in Chief, Pacific
19 Apr 75	Brigadier General William W. Palmer	Chief, Military Equipment Delivery Team, Cambodia
24-29 Apr 75	Mr. Eric C. Von Marbod	Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)
29 Apr 75	Brigadier General Richard E. Carey	Commanding General, 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade

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## CHAPTER 15

EVACUATION OF MILITARY REGIONS 1 AND 2

1. (U) GENERAL. The evacuation of Military Regions (MR's) 1 and 2 was the result of the inability of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) to contain the Communist Spring/Summer Campaign. The mass civilian evacuation of Quang Tri Province and subsequent refugee influx into Hue and Da Nang presaged the US evacuation of Da Nang. The withdrawal from the central highlands on 15 March and the resultant exodus along Route 7B created refugee problems in Nha Trang which eventually led to the US withdrawal from MR 2.

2. (U) EVACUATION OF MILITARY REGION 1.

a. In MR 1, North Vietnamese Army (NVA) gains during the first phase of the offensive, combined with the deployment of the Marine Division from Quang Tri to Da Nang and the withdrawal of the Airborne Division, triggered a mass exodus from Quang Tri on 17 March. Initial reports indicated that up to 95% of the population of Quang Tri had relocated to Hue. The influx of refugees into Hue and rumors that the Government of Vietnam (GVN) was going to forfeit Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces started a mass evacuation of Hue on 18 March. Concurrent with that exodus, on the night of 18 March, all US Government employees continued to conduct liaison in Da Nang. Selected US employees continued to conduct liaison in Hue during daylight hours until 23 March when 30 rounds of 122mm artillery impacted near the US compound. By 24 March, I Corps Forward and its subordinate units had been withdrawn to Da Nang.

b. By 25 March, Da Nang contained more than a million people, half of whom were civilian and military refugees from Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces. The failure of the GVN to control the refugee situation prompted the US Consul General (ConGen) in Da Nang to start evacuating US dependents. The massive evacuation of US civilian and Local National (LN) US Government employees started in earnest on 26 March; however, by 2000H hours that evening crowds at the airport were impeding the loading of contract aircraft. As legitimately manifested US citizens, Vietnamese and Third Country Nationals (TCN's) attempted to board waiting aircraft, RVNAF members and their families, previously hidden among the airport buildings, rushed the loading ramps and entered the aircraft. By 0600H hours on 27 March, refugees had crowded the airport and were on parts of the runway. During that afternoon and evening, in attempts to load legitimate passengers, aircraft were parked and loaded in isolated areas or passengers were helicopter lifted to Marble Mountain air-strip and evacuated to Nha Trang by Air America cargo aircraft.

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c. As the refugee situation at the airport suspended the airlift, the ConGen was forced to shift to sealift operations. On the evening of 27 March, remaining US employees and TCN's were assembled at the Alamo Annex Apartments and the ConGen compound. At 0400H hours on 28 March, the ConGen authorized the final evacuation of Da Nang. The remainder of the US evacuees, LN employees and refugees were loaded on barges and transported to commercial ships. As US citizens were being loaded, evacuation vessels were also forced to take on refugees riding tugboats and sampans. All vessels were overloaded and ill-equipped to handle feeding and security. By one estimate, approximately 20-25% of those evacuated were RVNAF members. After loading, the ships departed Da Nang and arrived approximately 20 hours later at Cam Ranh Bay. From Cam Ranh, US employees were flown to Saigon.

### 3. (U) EVACUATION OF MILITARY REGION 2.

a. Evacuation from MR 2 commenced on 11 March when the Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) started to move its dependents in VNAF C-130 aircraft. The loss of radio contact with Ban Me Thuot the following day, interdictions of routes 14, 19 and 21, combined with the loss of several district towns, persuaded President Nguyen Van Thieu to order the evacuation of Pleiku and Kontum. In Pleiku, II Corps Forward began to evacuate as early as 14 March. Special flights during the same day evacuated contractors and missionaries. The following day, US citizens and US Government LN employees began what was to be the one-day evacuation of Pleiku. LN employees were loaded aboard buses and transported directly to waiting aircraft. Each bus was accompanied by a US citizen in order to gain access to the air base. Unlike Da Nang, the Pleiku airlift was relatively free of incidents. By 1900H hours on 15 March, the evacuation to Nha Trang had been completed.

b. Evacuation of a small contingent of US employees from Qui Nhon and Binh Dinh Province was accomplished on 27 March with little interference from the local populace. The rapid evacuation from Qui Nhon followed the uncovering of a Viet Cong plan to kidnap US citizens. By 28 March, all field elements from the highlands, the contingent from Qui Nhon and a portion of the ConGen 1 staff were in Nha Trang.

c. Concurrent with the evacuation from MR 1, ConGen 2 began to reduce US Mission personnel in MR 2 and to move Da Nang refugees to Saigon. A few staff members remained until 1 April when the last Americans were withdrawn from Nha Trang. During the final days, crowds began to gather around the ConGen compound. A helipad was bulldozed in the parking lot and the final evacuation was accomplished from within the compound. Employees were assembled in the compound and then helicopter lifted to waiting aircraft. Contact was lost with Nha Trang on 3 April 1975.

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4. (C) PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS ON EVACUATION OF MR'S 1 AND 2.

a. The following are excerpts from after-action reports submitted by the US Air Attache to the RVN and five Defense Attache Office employees assigned to the Intelligence Branch Regional Liaison Offices (RLO).

b. The observations and comments presented herein were made by individuals who were trained intelligence collectors with previous experience in RVN or adjacent countries.

(1) Mr. James Schofield, RLO-Hue:

(a) "On 8 and 9 March, the NVA/VC started Phase I of their Spring/Summer Campaign. The VC units that infiltrated into the lowlands were unable to gain the support of the population. The population, in fact, appeared to be very much afraid of the VC and fled. Without popular support, the VC were quickly isolated, dispersed and eliminated by GVN forces. Total NVA/VC casualties during Phase I of the campaign were approximately 750 killed and over 50 captured. GVN losses were less than 200 killed and missing.

(b) "Morale, subsequent to the GVN's success in repulsing Phase I of the NVA/VC Spring/Summer Campaign, appeared good...; however, on 15 March, LTC Do Ky, Quang Tri Province Chief, related that the military, political and economic situation in MR 1 was like that of a very strong person who was seriously infected with a terminal disease.... He said that the skin, eyes and hair may appear healthy and the individual may even feel well, but that death was imminent. LTC Ky said the problem in South Vietnam and I Corps was that no one wanted to take the responsibility for making a decision. He said the Marine Division was being redeployed from Quang Tri Province to the Da Nang area, but that no one had determined whether to defend Quang Tri Province. LTC Ky said the Marines were the heart of Quang Tri Province and without them the people would not stay. He also said that he did not have sufficient forces to defend Quang Tri Province without the marines.

(c) "On 16 March, the 369th Marine Brigade moved out of Quang Tri Province. On 16 or 17 March, LTC Ky suggested that GVN civil servants and military personnel evacuate their dependents. This triggered a mass civilian exodus from the province. The evacuation of the civilian population from Quang Tri Province was almost complete. Some estimates were as high as 95%. There was some artillery and rocket fire along QL-1 during the evacuation, but casualties were light. The Quang Tri refugees streamed into Hue. Many moved in with relatives or friends; others had no place to stay and grouped along the streets. No GVN effort was made to funnel the refugees into camps and no real police effort was made to check identification papers.

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(d) "By 18 March, the population of Hue, influenced by rumors that the GVN was going to forfeit Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces to the NVA/VC, started moving south to Da Nang. Many of the vehicles evacuating from Hue were ARVN 2½-ton trucks and jeeps. Some of the evacuation by military vehicles was authorized, but much of it was without authority. Many staff officers and commanders were absent from their duties during this period. The officers' attitude, in general, was: 'Let the soldiers take care of their families so that they can fight when the battle comes.' Gigantic traffic jams slowed traffic and NVA/VC rocket fire reportedly killed refugees by the hundreds. Many refugees moved by boat, but loss of life in their movement was also reported as high. On 20 March, several refugees informed me that the only people remaining in Hue were old people and a few teenagers who had remained behind to watch family property, people who had no money or friends to help them evacuate and people who did not think that the situation was serious enough to warrant evacuation.

(e) "In the evening of 23 March, the I Corps G3 advised that the 1st Division had been unable to control the NVA breakthrough and that enemy units had passed into Phu Loc District behind the 1st Division's front line. He continued to explain that the Hue salient was untenable and that the 1st Division, the 147th Marine Brigade and assorted support units were withdrawing north to Tan My and then south down the Vinh Loc District peninsula to ZD120110. From there, the fleeing troops were to cross the Dam Cau Hai Channel at ZD1210 into Phu Loc District. ARVN engineers constructed a bridge at this location prior to the arrival of the evacuating troops.

(f) "The withdrawal through Vinh Loc District proved to be a disaster. NVA artillery harassed the 1st Division on the narrow peninsula and interdicted the bridge crossing from Vinh Loc to Phu Loc District. In Phu Loc District, several units were ambushed by the NVA. The 1st Division casualties in the evacuation were very high. The 147th Marine Brigade and scattered RF and PF units were picked up by VNN landing craft. At Tan My (YD815308), the panicked marines were reported to have killed a large number of civilians and territorial force soldiers in the process of securing space on the evacuation craft.

(g) "During the night of 18 March, all US Government employees were evacuated from Hue by Air America helicopter. Selected US Government employees continued to return to Hue to conduct business until the evening of 23 March. Approximately 30 rounds of 122mm artillery impacted in the vicinity of the province office during the afternoon of 23 March. All US personnel departed from Hue by 1700H hours on 23 March. By the morning of 24 March, most of the GVN and I Corps Forward staffs and personnel had already left Hue and, in most instances, northern MR 1.

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(h) "The general atmosphere in 1 Corps Headquarters was extremely pessimistic and confused. None of the 1 Corps staff officers felt that Da Nang could be held. Their primary concern was securing seats for their dependents on Air America flights.

(i) "On the morning of 26 March, I was directed by the MR 1 ConGen to proceed to Nha Trang to assist in their evacuation. I had great trouble getting to the Da Nang field. This trouble consisted of several traffic jams. GVN marines were firing shots to control traffic.

(j) "I was unable to get a flight to Nha Trang on 26 March. During the remainder of 26 March, I assisted US Government personnel in loading evacuation aircraft. VNAF personnel were intercepting evacuation aircraft to put on their dependents. During the day, control quickly eroded.

(k) "Mr. Francis, the ConGen, made several efforts to control the situation. These attempts included exchanging evacuation aircraft to evacuate VNAF dependents for a guarantee from the 1st Air Division commander for security on the remaining evacuation aircraft. The 1st Air Division commander was unable to uphold his part of the agreement. Control was completely lost the morning of 27 March. Mr. Francis ordered the remaining US personnel to move from the air base to the deep-water pier for evacuation by ship. This was attempted, but the exits from the air base were blocked and we were eventually evacuated by helicopter. From the air base we went to the Marble Mountain Air Base and were evacuated by Air American C-46 to Nha Trang.... In contrast to the GVN side, the MR 1 and MR 2 ConGen personnel performed outstandingly in general and handled their individual responsibilities as well as could have been expected under the existing security situations."

(2) Mr. William Heath, RLO-Da Nang:

(a) "By 26 March 1975, it was apparent that the ARVN would not be defending any part of MR 1. At that time, the ConGen began to accelerate the process of moving out Americans, TCN's and US Government employees. A logical and orderly ticketing system was begun early in the day and employees were briefed concerning the system and the priorities that would apply. After lunch, the tempo and urgency picked up as people began to realize that Da Nang was extremely vulnerable and that the city and air base might be attacked or rocketed at any time.

(b) "An additional element, besides the estimated half-million civilian refugees, was the armed soldiers from units both north and south of Da Nang who had entered the city in disorder. Many

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were without shoes or equipment other than their weapons. They were obviously hungry and demoralized. Their presence, sitting in the middle of some of the main streets and walking in small groups, added to the general fear and tension.

(c) "When it was decided that the ticketing and manifesting of flights must be speeded up, Mr. Nick McNeil, Consular Section, ConGen 1, and Mr. John Rogers, Joint Casualty Resolution Center (JCRC), who were in charge of this phase of the Evacuation Plan, agreed to work directly from a list of US, TCM and other foreigners maintained by McNeil's office. Vietnamese employees were to be ticketed using lists furnished by the Administrative Section. [The Office of the Special Assistant (OSA)] ConGen 1, and USAID employees were taken care of early, but it was not until after 1700H hours, 26 March, that the Administration Section began to collect the names of our DAO employees and the members of their immediate families.

(d) "I personally was scheduled to leave on a special World Airways 727 flight at 2040H hours on 26 March and, as instructed, I reported to Air America on the air base at a few minutes past 1800H hours. The reception, checking in of baggage and making out a manifest, went smoothly and calmly. At about 2100 H hours, the 727 arrived, the gates of [the OSA compound] where we were assembled in a warehouse, were opened and the passengers began an orderly stream to the back of the aircraft. Since it was obvious there would be plenty of room on the flight, another American and myself remained seated in the warehouse as the passengers went out and intended to bring up the rear and help any stragglers. As we went outside, we saw jeeps and cars pulled up outside [the OSA compound] in front of Air America, and families, mostly accompanied by what appeared to be members of VNAF, were running onto the flight line and joining the stream of principal passengers. Upon reaching the loading ramp area, I fell in at the end of the line and still felt we could all get aboard with a little crowding in the seats and aisle. However, the crush at the base of the ramp made order impossible. One of the women fought to get aboard and her military husband tried to push her over the side of the ramp, adding to the panic. The crew apparently had a full load aboard and, aware that people were still approaching the aircraft, began to shout for us to go back. The ramp went up, the jets were given thrust, and the plane taxied out and took off. I returned to the ConGen compound and slept for a few hours in the RLO office.

(e) "At 0600H hours, 27 March, I returned to [the OSA compound] at Air America on the base. Large crowds were forming... at the air base gate. I was processed in with others who had been left behind the day before. With the arrival of the first plane, an pushing and shoving began again and only a few people from

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the warehouse yard got aboard. There appeared to be hundreds of people on the parking apron and I believe they took the space aboard flights that had been intended for ourselves, our employees and their families.

(f) "At about 1030H hours, 27 March, COL Dang, I Corps Chief of Staff, came to the yard and asked me about what had been taking place and what measures I recommended to correct the situation. I told him that, in my opinion, armed military police or troops, plus 'bullhorns' to keep the people informed and give directions, plus barricades were needed immediately.

(g) "There were a few flights during the day, but I believe many did not come in due to the crowds and disorder on the aprons and taxiways. At about 1900H hours, I was put aboard a stake-body truck with a mixed US, French and Vietnamese load of 40 adults. Approximately 30 minutes later, we were hastily loaded aboard a C-46 at a remote point on a taxiway and arrived in Nha Trang at about 2030H hours, 27 March.

(h) "At the time of my departure, I had seen no looting or robbery, just a growing panic and frustration. Several of the senior I Corps staff officers accompanied their families out of Da Nang on US Agency for International Development (USAID) flights on 27 March. I believe some of the officers and their families were also stranded and may never have gotten out. Whether intentional or not, priority was given to OSA and USAID employees, and only a few DAO employees are accounted for."

(3) Mr. Paul Tracy, Senior, Senior RLO-Da Nang:

(a) "On 25 March 1975, in the morning, the ConGen, Mr. A. A. Francis, held a staff meeting and told those present he was going to draw down the number of US employees manning the ConGen office. The first to depart were to be US women and children. He also said some of the US contract employees were to depart. He furthermore said that he did not want to create a panic nor add to the already volatile situation within the Vietnamese community. Therefore, all US personnel designated to depart were to make special efforts in maintaining an outward appearance of 'business as usual.' He told all departments, except OSA and RLO, to discontinue reporting.

(b) "Upon returning to the office, I put into operation a 24-hour round-the-clock liaison office with the G3 Section, MR 1 HQ Mr. James W. Schofield and Mr. James J. Adams, along with interpreter/translators, were designated to man this office, while Mr. Charles W. Heath and I maintained the office in the Consulate. Communication between the two offices was by telephone and voice radio.

March 28, 1975. Mr. George Bilven followed Mr. Jean Rogers, USA, to the Francis' house which was just around the corner. I then followed them to come along, but Mr. Bilven is not an American. I also told Mr. Bilven I was not moving without Mr. Bygg who was an interpreter/translator and would be invaluable, so he was allowed to come along. We remained at Mr. Francis' house along with a mixed crowd of US personnel from various departments. Contract employees and British, Filipino and Vietnamese personnel were also present.

(h) "On 28 March, at approximately 0400H hours, Mr. Francis returned to his house and told the people that the current situation warranted immediate evacuation from Da Nang. He then turned and asked Mr. Charles Browne, Mr. Roger Keeling and me to accompany him back to the US ConGen compound to assist him in making one final security sweep of the offices. It was at this time that the ConGen handed me a loaded M16 rifle and said I might have to use it. We then drove to the ConGen compound where Mr. Francis asked us to collect all the radios that we could find. Upon completion, Mr. Robert Berg, Deputy OSA, asked me to provide physical security for a barge that was to be moved out of the compound to a barge that was waiting just across the street loading refugees. Although I thought it odd that there were no USA staff on this, I initially provided security. I escorted a vehicle along with the USA employees and went to the barge where the US Marines had cleared a way for the car to back in and off again.

(i) "The barge was moved as quickly as possible with very little disturbance to the refugees. We then boarded the barge and, shortly thereafter, a tug came along and moved us out to the vicinity of the barge later site at the mouth of the Han River.

(j) "Mr. Charles Currier, Political Officer, was in charge of the shiploading operation and asked me to remain on the barge with an interpreter/translator to keep the refugees pacified and under control. We remained on the barge until about 1400H hours, continually attempting to thwart boarding efforts by the many people who arrived in sampans. This was finally accomplished by relating to those aboard the barge that some would have to get off if any more got aboard as the barge was already overcrowded.

(k) "The tug returned at about 1400H hours and pushed the barge to the vicinity of transport, Pioneer Contender. When the tug arrived, a large number of sampans were there was considerable confusion and people aboard the barge. Each person wanted to get aboard the ship first. Compounding the situation was the arrival of another tug which provided and whose passengers scrambled aboard the barge and landed on the rampway. Several sampans also arrived, adding to the panic by boarding and pushing and shoving

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passengers. This caused further panic aboard the barge, as the newly arrived tugboat was positioned in a way that allowed its passengers to have a more direct route to the gangway. Because of this situation, Mr. A. Vollbrecht and I boarded the tugboat and had it pull away from the barge telling the people they could be second after the barge off-loaded. This quieted them down somewhat, as they could see that we were physically aboard the tug and would not leave them.

(l) "I then told Mr. Vollbrecht to follow me to the other side of the tug where the sampans were still coming alongside and off-loading their passengers onto the tug. It was then that I saw several passengers pass money to the sampan operators. I told Mr. Vollbrecht that we were going to board a sampan and get it to take us back to the ship; he nodded agreement and we boarded a sampan. While enroute, I noticed an OSA speedboat. I hailed it and was picked up from the sampan. I then requested that the speedboat go alongside the Pioneer Contender, opposite from where the refugees were loading. A ladder was dropped to us and we climbed aboard the ship.

(m) "On the ship I observed a mixed civilian/military mass of refugees. I must estimate of the 5,600 refugees, at least 1,500 were military men from various units. A US Marine sergeant told me that he and others had taken many weapons away from those boarding. I personally relieved three Vietnamese men of handguns. There were also many able-bodied Vietnamese men aboard who did not make an attempt to assist their fellow countrymen in any way.

(n) "The last refugee came aboard at about 1925H hours and the ship got underway for Cam Ranh Bay, arriving there at 1200H hours, 29 March. Disembarking commenced at about 1400H hours. After disembarking, I then boarded an Air America plane along with a mixed US group and landed at Saigon about 1730H hours."

(4) Mr. John Good, RLO-Pleiku:

(a) "During the day of 15 March 1975, Pleiku City, in the central highlands of RVN, was completely evacuated of all US Government employees, both American and LN. Although exact figures are not known, in excess of 800 persons were evacuated from both Pleiku and Kontum Cities. This figure does not include TCN's, missionaries and others who had evacuated earlier in the week. The evacuation, as a whole, was successful and was carried out relatively calmly.

(b) "Earlier in the week, VNAF had begun to fly C-130 aircraft to Pleiku airbase to evacuate VNAF dependents to Saigon. At that time, I recommended that nonessential US employees and their families be quietly evacuated and that other nonessential quasi-official personnel and organizations be advised to leave the area until the situation clarified. I also recommended that

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an alternate emergency evacuation plan be discussed among the Americans, in case the primary means of evacuation failed. The ConGen in Nha Trang did not concur with the suggestion of moving employees on the basis that it might cause a panic in the city. This particular consideration was not actually applicable, as VNAF was already evacuating their dependents and people in the town were taking any available means, mostly Air Vietnam flights and VNAF C-130's, to leave. As to the final evacuation preparations, these were not even discussed in the small US Pleiku community until the night before the evacuation.

(c) "No hint of an impending, complete evacuation of Pleiku by RVNAF had been received until the morning of 14 March when a liaison meeting with II Corps Headquarters revealed that it had moved or was moving half of its staff to Nha Trang. This, at first, was not thought to be cause for alarm, as it appeared to be a decision based on tactical and strategic plans. Nevertheless, it emphasized the need to reduce the number of personnel in the Pleiku area. This move was also unusual in that none of the US agencies in Pleiku had been forewarned that the move was to take place. It was then decided that as many US Government employees and dependents, as well as nonessential members of the US Mission, would be moved out of the area as soon as possible. Plans were for this RLO, the USAID Province Representative and two OSA members to remain behind with a minimum number of LN personnel. The earliest the evacuation could be started was on Saturday, 15 March, with the exception of most of the contractors and missionaries who left on special flights in the afternoon of 14 March.

(d) "The evacuation on 15 March was conducted with a minimum of confusion and panic. Some problems arose in locating people, getting them through the air base gate, establishing priorities on dependents, etc., but these were all overcome and handled as they came up....An American escort was required for each busload of employees and dependents that arrived at the air base. Without the escort the air base guards would not permit the LN's to enter.

(e) "Late in the afternoon of 15 March, word was received from Nha Trang that all Americans were to evacuate the Pleiku area as soon as possible. This word caused some panic on the part of the LN's and a great deal of inconvenience for the Americans because the minimum essential group had planned on remaining at least one more day and, thus, had many last minute tasks to accomplish under trying circumstances. Finally, however, all tasks were accomplished and control was regained over the situation. The total evacuation was successfully completed. The last aircraft with the last group of people arrived in Nha Trang between 1800H and 1900H hours, 15 March."

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(5) Mr. Carl Burgner, RLO with 22nd Infantry Division-Qui Nhon: "On 26 March, the RLO was briefed by OSA-Qui Nhon that the VC had proposed a plot to kidnap all Americans in Qui Nhon. This report was verified by OSA-Qui Nhon through other sources. On 27 March, OSA and the RLO departed Qui Nhon for Nha Trang."

(6) Colonel McCurdy, Air Attache to the Republic of Vietnam:

(a) "On 23 March, the US Army Attache, Colonel Wahle, flew to Da Nang to assess the deteriorating military situation. Refugees, many of them armed soldiers from broken units, were filling Da Nang City. Air Vietnam was in process of supplementing its flights to and from Da Nang by chartering World Airways Boeing 727's. Colonel Wahle's estimate was that Mr. Francis should immediately evacuate his staff, other Americans and associated Vietnamese. Mr. Francis agreed and summoned the US Air Attache for advice and assistance.

(b) "Arriving in Da Nang on 26 March, the Air Attache found the ConGen's office in the throes of improvising an evacuation under the most difficult circumstances. Mr. Francis personally negotiated use of a Philippine LST for evacuation of Vietnamese employees and their families. Americans were being extricated on all available aircraft. However, the temper of the time and the crowd did not permit dedicating aircraft solely to Americans. To prevent panic, Vietnamese had to be taken out in preponderant numbers.

(c) "Mr. Francis and the Air Attache held a brief discussion of the ways in which assistance could be provided. Mr. Francis' wish was that a helicopter extraction force be provided to evacuate fifty or less (hard-core) personnel from the ICCS pad at the northern edge of the city...across the street from the ConGen's quarters. The Air Attache's offer to remain and assist was refused in the belief that more good could be done in Saigon alerting the US Mission and the military at United States Support Activities Group (USSAG)/7th Air Force to the criticality of the situation and the need for help.

(d) "The Air Attache returned to Saigon and placed a secure call to Major General Archer (Chief of Staff, USSAG/7th AF), after briefing Mr. Wolfgang Lehmann, the Deputy Chief of Mission, and Mr. George Jacobson, the Special Assistant to the Ambassador for Field Operations, who emerged as the true supervisor of the US Mission evacuation effort within Vietnam. The gist of the conversation, confirmed the next day by message, was a request for two rescue helicopters to be placed on alert at Nha Trang to act as an extraction force for a group of fifty. General Archer indicated

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that he held little hope that the request would be approved because:

1 'There was a ban on flying over Laos and the AAA defenses along the North Vietnamese roads had been increased. The route to Nha Trang would have to be flown over Cambodia, requiring refueling and at least 8 hours flight time.

2 'All USSAG/7th AF forces were at that time committed to EAGLE PULL (Phnom Penh evacuation).

3 'A release on the use of US Forces within the RVN would have to be obtained from the highest levels of government. However, if any emergency were to develop, an effort would be made to respond.'

(e) "During the day of 27 March, the situation at Da Nang became more and more chaotic. It was becoming extremely difficult to maintain order at the airfield. Personnel not manifested were pushing into the waiting lines and endangering weaker passengers. Armed individuals became a danger. The ConGen reportedly spent most of the day personally keeping order within waiting lines and attempting to disguise his efforts to draw down the level of his staff by mixing Vietnamese in with Americans on aircraft he had requested. However, at the end of the day, the intent was to resume operations the next morning.

(f) "It was a shock, therefore, when Mr. Jacobson telephoned the Air Attache that night requesting that the helicopters be activated for extraction. Of course, nothing beyond preliminary planning had taken place at USSAG/7th AF, which was still waiting for higher headquarters approval of the alert request. The Air Attache then immediately called Lieutenant General Burns, Commander of USSAG/7th AF, and passed the request for emergency assistance. General Burns received it, expressed the same pessimism, but promised to immediately request permission to execute an extraction. The Air Attache then went to Mr. Jacobson's office where telephonic contact was being maintained with Da Nang and Nakhon Phanom, USSAG Headquarters. Subsequent phone conversations among Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Francis and General Burns resulted in weakening the request for helicopters because Mr. Francis opted to make another attempt at using the airport. In the interim, the request for helicopters was denied.

(g) "A later request was made for two C-130 aircraft from Clark AB to be over Da Nang at the time planned for the end of the fixed wing airlift to provide:

1 'A contingency 'mop-up' of persons who might not be able to get aboard the Air America and Air Vietnam aircraft planned for use.

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2 'The illusion of a greater number of airplanes and perhaps to avoid the impression among the waiting crowds that no more aircraft would arrive. . . However, this request also was denied. . . ."

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## CHAPTER 16

### EVACUATION OF SAIGON

#### Section A

##### Introduction

1. (FOUO) GENERAL. This chapter contains excerpts and summaries of reports submitted by the principal Defense Attache Office (DAO) officials who participated in the planning and execution of the evacuation of Saigon. The reports were written from the perspective of the individual officer or section and represent that particular viewpoint. Although they have been edited to eliminate duplication and enhance continuity, some contradictions and inconsistencies may be apparent. An attempt to resolve these variations in viewpoint would have destroyed the eye-witness character of the reports. Furthermore, no single individual at DAO was in a position to observe the entire operation and to serve as the final arbiter for accuracy. In many cases, supporting documents and records were not available due to their shipment to various locations, or because they were destroyed. Therefore, each section has been written according to the best recollections of each author. Major General Homer D. Smith, USA, Defense Attache, Vietnam, provides the comprehensive overview in a personal recollection of The Final Forty-five Days in Vietnam.

2. (FOUO) CHRONOLOGY.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
<u>1 April</u>	Evacuation Control Center (ECC) becomes operational.  AN/TSC-54 placed in operation at DAO.
<u>4 April</u>	Crash of C-5A aircraft departing Tan Son Nhut with Vietnamese orphans and attendants aboard.  Evacuee Processing Center (EPC) completed within the DAO Annex compound.
<u>5 April</u>	Combat Control Team (CCT) USAF, initiates operations launching USAF C-141 and C-130 aircraft.
<u>7 April</u>	DAO Special Planning Group (SPG) completes population density plot indentifying 7000 potential United States (US) and Third Country National (TCN) evacuees.
<u>8 April</u>	F-5 aircraft piloted by disaffected Vietnamese Air Force

16-A-1

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(VNAF) officer bombs South Vietnam's Presidential Palace.

- 11 April Phnom Penh falls; Cambodian rice lift terminated.
- 13 April Thirteen-man USMC guard detachment from the US Embassy Marine Security Guard assigned to DAO replacing nine-man Nha Trang/Da Nang detachment previously committed.
- 14 April DAO SPG-coordinated metropolitan evacuation plan approved.
- 16 April Project ALAMO (conversion of DAO compound to self-sustaining evacuee holding facility) completed.
- Radio-equipped buses for surface evacuation in metropolitan area staged throughout Saigon.
- 17 April Authorization received for evacuation of local national intelligence/operations (sensitive) personnel.
- 18 April First sensitive flights initiated.
- 20 April EPC at DAO gymnasium placed in operation.
- 21 April Around the clock evacuation flights (C-141 by day; C-130's by night) ordered.
- 28 April C-141 aircraft discontinued with reliance fully on C-130 aircraft for evacuee airlift.
- Around-the-clock evacuation flights using C-130 aircraft ordered.
- Captured A-37 VNAF aircraft attack Tan Son Nhut flightline with 250-pound bombs, damaging numerous VNAF aircraft at 1800 hours.
- US airlift ordered halted at 1815 hours.
- US airlift reinstated at 2000 hours; two C-130 aircraft cleared for landing at Tan Son Nhut (TSN).
- Surface evacuation convoy escorts alerted to proceed to route staging areas at 1900 hours.
- 29 April NVA initiates heavy rocket attack on Tan Son Nhut at 0400 hours; one USAF C-130 aircraft destroyed without casualties opposite Flying Tiger Operations.

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Two remaining USAF C-130 aircraft depart Tan Son Nhut without damage.

Two 122mm rockets impact vicinity DAO Gate #4 USMC guard post killing two marines on duty there at 0410 hours.

SPG ordered to initiate surface and air evacuation of DAO employees from downtown Saigon to DAO compound at 0700 hours.

CCT at Flying Tiger Operations reports VNAF aircraft jettisoning tanks and ordnance on runways while abandoned aircraft block others. Several hundred local nationals on runways and taxiways attempting to board VNAF C-130 aircraft at 0730 hours.

CCT members retrograded to Pacific Architect & Engineers (PA&E) operations shack at 0745 hours; Tan Son Nhut determined unusable for fixed wing evacuation purposes.

Bus convoys and Air America initiate metropolitan evacuation of DAO personnel at 0810 hours.

Complete loss of VNAF command and control signalled with arrival of VNAF Commander, LTG Minh and top VNAF staff officers at DAO at 0815 hours requesting evacuation.

Ambassador Martin arrives at DAO and confers with MG Smith and COL. LeGro at 0940 hours.

SPG ordered to expand on-going DAO metropolitan evacuation to include all US Mission personnel and dependents at 1000 hours.

Execution order for Operation FREQUENT WIND received by 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade (9th MAB) 1215 hours.

Bus convoy TEXAS broken up by dissident ARVN elements on Cach Mang Street with two buses disabled by small arms fire at 1210 hours.

First helicopters departed for pre-launch (L)-hour multideck operations at 1230 hours.

L-Hour for FREQUENT WIND changed to 1400 hours at 1306 hours.

16-A-3

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L-Hour for FREQUENT WIND changed to 1500 hours at 1346 hours.

Surface evacuation bus convoys mobbed by Vietnamese at 14 Tran Quy Cap Street and #6 Chien Si Circle requiring overhead small arms fire for extraction between 1400 and 1500 hours.

First flight of 9th MAB aircraft lands in DAO compound at 1506 hours.

First flight of 9th MAB aircraft with evacuees departs DAO at 1512 hours.

US Embassy informs DAO at 1708 hours that approximately 2000 evacuees located there; a SPARROW HAWK (USMC reaction force) platoon landed at Embassy as additional security.

Last (tenth) surface bus convoy from metropolitan area entered DAO compound at 1745.

Termination of Air America rooftop extraction from metropolitan area at 1830 hours.

9th MAB executes last helicopter lift of local national personnel and US citizens from DAO Annex helicopter landing zone at 1830 hours.

Elements of 9th MAB at DAO helilifted to US Embassy at 1900 hours to augment USMC security forces already there.

AN/TSC-54 satellite communications terminal ceases operation as a result of intermittent power failure from primary power source

MG Smith and last DAO elements depart DAO compound at 2000 hours.

AN/TSC-54 terminal, Communications Center and money destroyed by USMC EOD team at 2330 hours.

DAO Building #5000 destroyed at 2345 hours by USMC EOD team.

30 April

Last elements of 9th MAB extracted from DAO compound at 0012 hours.

16-A-4  
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Ambassador Martin lifted from US Embassy rooftop with principal staff members at 0458 hours.

Last elements of 9th MAB extracted from US Embassy at 0753 hours.

Last 9th MAB elements arrive on TF-76 platforms at 0835 hours; air operations portion of Operation FREQUENT WIND completed.

16-A-5

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## Section B

### Observations of the Defense Attache

1. (FOUO) This paper was written within a few days after my evacuation from Saigon on 29 April 1975. It represents my thoughts and recollections leading up to the final 45 days of my tour as the Defense Attache, Republic of Vietnam, my recollections of the period from 14 March through 28 April 1975 and the events that occurred on 29 April 1975 up until I departed the Defense Attache Office compound at 2000H that night.
2. (FOUO) To begin with there are certain retrospective thoughts and ideas which most probably contributed to the situation which led up to the final evacuation of the Defense Attache Office (DAO) and the remainder of the American Mission from Saigon.

a. There is no question but what the action of the United States Congress to appropriate only \$700 million of the \$1 billion authorized for the Defense Assistance Vietnam (DAV) program had an erosive effect on the morale of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) and probably upon certain other elements of the national administration such as the Ministry of National Defense (MOND). The erosion, although gradual, was enough to set the stage for much further erosion in connection with the later proposed supplemental. In nearly every case when a high ranking American visited Saigon, the message was the same; to wit, every attempt would be made to secure a supplemental appropriation, but no definite promises could be made. Hearing this, the Joint General Staff (JGS) and other higher officers of the RVNAF believed that the chances were very good that a supplemental would be forthcoming.

b. The efforts of the US administration to push through the supplemental at first buoyed the hopes of the RVNAF and, indeed, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam (RVN). However, the visits of the various Congressional Delegations (CODELS) and the subsequent actions by the Congress pointed to the fact that no supplemental was forthcoming. This, following the loss of Phuoc Long Province (and the failure of the United States to provide the military clout promised in the event of overt and obvious North Vietnamese (NVA) incursions), caused RVN and RVNAF to face up to the obvious -- the fact that, despite promises in the past and hopes expressed in the more recent past, they were going to have to face an ever

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increasingly strong enemy force with little or no help from anyone. I believe that this was brought rather strongly to the attention of President Thieu by his own CODEL which had visited the United States and our Congress in an effort to aid in the timely passage of a supplemental DAV appropriation.

c. There followed the meeting of President Thieu, Prime Minister Khiem, LTG Quang (military advisor to the President) and General Cao Van Vien, Chief of the Joint General Staff, plus MG Pham Van Phu, Commander of Military Region 2 (MR 2). This meeting was held at the White House at Cam Ranh Bay on or about 14 March 1975. During the week prior, the attack on Ban Me Thuot (BMT) had surprised RVNAF to the extent that the 23rd Infantry Division, or elements thereof, plus various Regional Force (RF) elements had been badly mauled. My information is that President Thieu had decided that BMT was much more essential to the continued existence of the Republic than was, for instance, the provinces of Kontum and Pleiku. I had known for sometime that RVNAF anticipated having to give up certain territories if and when the time came. This had been based on inadequate forces coupled with inadequate materiel support. My information is that the President directed MG Phu to withdraw from Kontum and Pleiku in order to provide additional forces for the retaking of BMT. That Phu had anticipated fighting for these two provinces was evident by his request, a few weeks earlier, to increase the on-the-ground materiel levels for POL and ammunition to 90 days of supply. This request had been turned down by the JGS for two reasons -- (1) having less supplies on the ground would ostensibly give Phu additional incentive to keep highway QL-19, between Pleiku and Qui Nhon open; and (2) in case of massive attack on Pleiku, there would be less potential on-the-ground losses of materiel. At the time the decision was made to withdraw from the two provinces, QL-19 was interdicted at two points, had been for several days, and despite some effort on the part of MR 2 forces, the enemy forces had not been cleared. MG Phu returned to his headquarters at Pleiku and made the decision to pull out almost at once. It was his decision because the President had given him alone the authority to make it. I take note here of the fact that LTG Dong Van Khuyen, Chief of Staff of the JGS and the senior RVNAF logistician, had been out of the country since 11 March in connection with the illness of his father (cancer of the larynx which necessitated treatment in Japan). Had he been on duty at the time, I am convinced that he would have directed MG Phu to provide a detailed plan for any withdrawal. Plans for the withdrawal from these two areas were in existence, but I believe that they entailed a logistical

16-B-2

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withdrawal rather than total withdrawal. In any event, MG Phu loaded up his own headquarters and then turned the evacuation of the other RVNAF elements and local populace over to BG Tat, the Ranger Commander, who had been promoted just that day.

d. The evacuation began on Saturday, 15 March 1975, a fateful day in the history of the Republic of Vietnam. I became aware of it on the following day as reports thereof began to filter through to my staff. I might add here that I had seen General Vien on Friday afternoon, the 14th. We discussed the BMT situation and the general logistics situation, but not once did he mention what was going to happen at Pleiku and Kontum. In retrospect, I believe that either he had no idea that the withdrawal would occur as rapidly as it did or else he did not understand the difficulties associated with a withdrawal of that magnitude. I followed the action on Sunday, 16 March, and saw the beginnings of a real donnybrook. I visited General Vien the following day, since Monday was my regular day for such visits. I asked him pointblank what was going on in the highlands and he gave me the bulk of the information cited above. I asked him why he had not mentioned this to me the previous Friday and he told me that the President had made it very plain to those in attendance that this was a matter of such secrecy that they were not to mention it to anyone at all. I told him that, in my judgment, the entire withdrawal would develop into total chaos and that it could very well set the stage for some severe repercussions in the future. He acknowledged that this was possibly true and that, in retrospect, he should have notified me of the decision to make the withdrawal during our meeting the previous Friday. He emphasized though that the decision was not delegated to him to make. It was given directly to MG Phu by President Thieu.

e. As the withdrawal developed further, and as it became more and more clear that it would indeed be a debacle, President Thieu made still another decision which, as later proved, would further debilitate the situation. At another meeting with his senior military leaders and advisors, he decided to move the Airborne Division, in the line south and west of Da Nang, down to the Saigon area as a strategic reserve. At that point in time, there existed only the newly formed 4th Airborne Brigade of two battalions, a new marine brigade of two battalions and a newly formed ranger group as the strategic reserve in the Saigon area. These new elements had been hurriedly activated during the period late December - early February to be used, if necessary, during Tet. LTG Truong, MR I commander, was so upset about the decision to move the Airborne Division, that

16-7-3

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he journeyed down to Saigon for consultation with President Thieu. This effort was to no avail. The order stood. Reportedly, Truong advised Thieu that the withdrawal of the Airborne Division would require him to move the Marine Division south from the lines in and around Quang Tri to defend the Da Nang area. He also reportedly told the President that if this came to pass that he would more than likely have to give up Quang Tri Province and perhaps even Thua Thien Province. He did feel that he was capable of defending the city of Hue for an unspecified length of time. By this time, LTG Khuyen was back in country, having returned on or about 19 March 1975.

f. Upon the withdrawal of one airborne brigade, Truong ordered one marine brigade out of the lines at Quang Tri and replaced them with RF units. Reportedly, the province chief advised his own people to evacuate their families south and within hours there was a general evacuation of the civilian populace from Quang Tri. The NVA attacked out of Quang Tri, the RF withdrew and, in fact, the city itself fell. The movement of people and vehicles down route QL-1 south to Da Nang continued and as they came by Hue, the general populace of that city joined to the extent that the highway was choked with people and vehicles from the Hai Van Pass north to Phu Loc. During this time, Khuyen had the logistics people evacuating materiel -- principally ammunition and POL -- from the Phu Bai area adjacent to Hue. Once the road became impassable because of choking by personnel and vehicles, the only source of egress was through the small port of Tan My, just east of Hue. Unfortunately, the 325th NVA Division cut QL-1 in the vicinity of Phu Loc on or about 22 March, thereby precluding the movement of people down the highway. Instead they were told by RVNAF to move to the ocean shore for pickup by Army and Navy vessels. Almost immediately Tan My and the only road thereto became choked with people. It took Khuyen and his personnel over two days to clear the port of people so that they could once again evacuate materiel -- ammunition and POL. By this time, nearly 7,000 short tons of ammunition had been moved from Phu Bai to Hue and/or Tan My. Truong intended to defend the Hue enclave at least long enough to get the bulk of his materiel out and moved south. It was then that the "family syndrome" manifested itself.

g. Although the marine and airborne elements had their families in the Saigon area, ARVN all had their families in close proximity to where their areas of operation were. Consequently, as the chances for egress lessened, ARVN soldiers

16-B-4

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and officers became increasingly apprehensive about the welfare of their families. The famous ARVN 1st Division first fell prey to this condition. As it became evident that the NVA buildup was cutting them off from access to Da Nang except by sea, ARVN pulled out of the line to get their families to safety. Suddenly, LTC Truong lost a significant part of his fighting strength. Where he had planned to defend Hue, he found that he could no longer do it. Accordingly, another quick switch in plans was made with the result that another two division sets of equipment and significant tonnages of ammunition and POL were lost to the enemy.

h. I think that the details of the withdrawal from Hue are well known so I will not elaborate further except to say that this entire operation badly soured the feelings of the Vietnamese Marines. This was expressed to me by their commander, MG Lan, at Vung Tau, many days later. They had spent nearly two years in the lines at Quang Tri without a significant battle with the enemy and now, without fighting to any great extent, they were ordered to abandon their equipment and withdraw to Da Nang. To my knowledge, they were the only RVNAF force that withdrew as a body instead of so many thousand individuals.

i. While the foregoing was occurring, a similar stage was being set south of Da Nang within the area of operations of the 2nd ARVN Division. Whether by design or by order, this division began to withdraw to set up an enclave around the Chu Lai area with its small port. Tam Ky, the capital of Quang Tin Province, fell with little or no fighting. Once again the family syndrome took effect and what had been a viable fighting unit became a bunch of disorganized individuals oriented to survival of the family unit. Previously I had directed the movement of several tugs and barges from the Mekong convoy operation north to Da Nang to begin the retrograde of end items, ammunition and POL in anticipation of eventually having to abandon Da Nang. Before the 2nd Division dissolved, one tug and barge segment had pulled into the port of Chu Lai. Instead of taking on materiel, they were forced to take on personnel. Additional personnel moved by other small craft to the island of Cu Lao Re about 30 km east of Chu Lai. All in all about five to six thousand of this division were able to get out in this manner. Others attempted to make their way north to Da Nang -- again, with their families.

j. Holding the line to the south and west of Da Nang was the ARVN 3rd Division. As the refugees from south came north, the same syndrome took hold of the soldiers and officers of the 3rd Division to the extent that it was no longer a viable

16-B-5

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fighting unit and for all practical purposes the defense of Da Nang in that area no longer existed. By this time, Da Nang had almost one million refugees, to include thousands of armed soldiers. The evacuation of the American Consul General element, together with their local national workforce, had begun using available Air America aircraft. This gradually became impossible as time went on because it became increasingly evident to those in Da Nang that means for evacuation were very limited.

k. Again, previously I had directed that all available Military Sealift Command (MSC) shipping in the area be moved to Da Nang to backhaul materiel. This resulted in two ships plus other MSC ships joining the evacuation convoy. However, instead of materiel, they, of necessity, moved people. Tug and barge combinations moved people out to the MSC ships and then, finally, when it was no longer possible to move people because of insufficient shipping or intolerable shore conditions, the tug/barge combinations pulled loads of people south. Only a fraction of the refugees of Da Nang were moved. Hundreds of soldiers were left, as were their families. Additional significant quantities of end items, ammunition and POL were lost as were many line items of repair parts. None of the facilities storing these items were destroyed. I later learned that the depot commanders were awaiting orders from the Corps headquarters to initiate destruction.

l. In retrospect, had the one million refugees been successfully evacuated south, the RVN would have had an insurmountable problem with their relocation. As it was, they experienced great difficulties in assimilating the less than 100,000 that did escape.

m. The pandemonium which overtook reason in Da Nang literally wrested control of the city from all official presence. The last Americans out of the city escaped over the beach onto Vietnamese Naval craft along with the military hierarchy. Later in the evacuation of Saigon, the reverse would be true. The experience was shattering to all who participated. I talked with the United States Consul General, the MR 1 commander, the 3rd ARVN Division commander and others. All were in a daze for days thereafter and some had not fully recovered as late as 29 April when Saigon was evacuated. All told, approximately four division sets of equipment, one of two major ARVN depots and significant tonnages of ammunition and POL were lost to the enemy. In addition, three ARVN divisions no longer existed as such. The only troops pulled out which maintained any unit integrity were the marines.

16-B-6

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n. While the foregoing was occurring, the remnants of the elements from Pleiku and Kontum were emerging at Tuy Hoa, south of Qui Nhon. Concurrently, the ARVN 22nd Division was withdrawing east along QL-19 in an effort to establish a defensive perimeter around the area encompassing the air base at Phu Cat and the city of Qui Nhon. Once again President Thieu ordered a defense to the last man. The ARVN logistical elements were making every effort to retrograde POL and ammunition from the Qui Nhon area as well as bombs from Phu Cat. They were somewhat successful in this attempt for a while, but as it turned out it was to no avail anyway because the materiel was being retrograded to Cam Ranh Bay which would soon be lost. Very soon the press of people caused the retrograde efforts to become ineffective and in fact ARVN personnel walked out of the POL tank farm and ammunition depot. Eventually, the remnants of the 22nd Division were taken out of Qui Nhon during the night and moved south to Phuoc Tuy.

o. Tuy Hoa rapidly came under attack as the pursuing NVA 320th Division on route 7B decimated the ARVN Rangers and territorial forces blocking its advance. Meanwhile, the NVA 10th Division outflanked the airborne brigade defending in Khanh Duong District, Khanh Hoa Province and reached the coast at Ninh Hoa. As the bits and pieces of ARVN elements streamed southward to Nha Trang, the MR 2 commander, MG Phu, and LTG Thuan, former commander of MR 3 and then commanding the NCO Academy at Nha Trang, took off for parts unknown. Almost immediately the MR 2 Headquarters was deserted by the staff. This precipitated the evacuation of the American Consulate in Nha Trang. This was handled exclusively by Air America assets operating between Nha Trang and TSN. Unfortunately, it came about not as a result of enemy action, but panic on the part of ARVN, probably generated by the sudden departure of MG Phu. As late as several days later, enemy troops had not entered the city.

p. Next on the list was Phan Rang. The air base at Phan Rang had been taken over by the same 6th Air Division which had been ordered out of Pleiku in such an untimely manner. Once again the 6th Air Division had to evacuate -- this time to TSN and Bien Hoa. However, the base was continued in use as a forward area. Elements of 2nd ARVN Division were moved back to Phan Rang together with one airborne brigade. A MR 3 headquarters under the command of LTG Nghi, former commander of MR 4, was established. For some days ARVN held on to this area. There were even indications that they would reenter Nha Trang. Rather quickly this became impossible. Cam Ranh Bay came under attack

16-B-7

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and fell. All materiel moved from the north was lost to the enemy. Phan Rang finally fell and the remnants of the 2nd Division were lost.

q. At this point I shall digress and address the situation with respect to the VNAF. As the 6th Air Division withdrew from Pleiku under orders, they flew all of their flyable aircraft (A/C) out to Phan Rang. They did, however, leave approximately 80 A/C on the ground. These included several different types. A large number were the A-1 A/C which were in a semi-preserved state. They attempted to destroy these during subsequent days through air strikes, but were not overly successful. At Da Nang there was a much better opportunity to fly out all flyable A/C and to bring up to a flyable condition additional planes. A good number were evacuated, but a significant number were not. In fact, serviceable aircraft were left at Da Nang because pilots/crews left to evacuate their families. Phu Cat was a repeat to a large extent. Despite having the requisite time, VNAF was not able to get their A/C and other materiel evacuated. This story was repeated at Nha Trang and Phan Rang.

r. While their inability to move more of their assets was a result of limited transport aircraft, their concern for their families and personnel also influenced the situation. Theirs was a two phased plan with Phase I being relegated to personnel movement. In general, they never did get around to Phase II, that of moving materiel. I also feel that this failure was in part due to the inflexibility of the command structure. The various air divisions belonged to the MR commanders and took their orders accordingly. Where the MR commander failed to order an evacuation in a timely manner (and I know of no case where one was ordered in a timely manner), the job was done piecemeal. Thus, VNAF was gradually whittled down in size and became more and more bitter in their attitude toward ARVN.

s. The Vietnamese Navy (VNN) was much more flexible despite having the same command relationship with the MR commanders. VNN systematically dismantled radar sites and other bases and brought much of their materiel south in their own vessels.

t. From the time that Nha Trang fell, the JGS had begun making plans for the defense of the Saigon area. LTG Toan, the MR 3 commander, had the overall responsibility and was to be aided in this effort by LTG Minh, newly appointed commander of the Capital Military District. A strike force headquarters was constituted using the staff of the former MR 1 Command under the continued direction of LTC Truong. Their plan called for a

16-B-8

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strike force, consisting of the Marine and Airborne Divisions, to be used as the situation dictated. At this time the Marine Division was in Wung Tau being reconstituted. Enough materiel had been flown in from the United States or was being processed from the overhaul lines to equip two marine brigades. Two airborne brigades were available for a short while only. As it turned out, all of these assets were committed to LTG Toan in an effort to hold the enemy east of Bien Hoa. Efforts were being made to reconstitute the 22nd ARVN Division and the one brigade which was finally put together was almost immediately committed just south of Saigon on highway QL-4. The only other assets not committed were a combination of the 1st and 3rd ARVN Divisions under the command of MG Hinh. This element never did get reconstituted in time to do anything. ARVN had simply run out of materiel and that which was coming from the United States did not materialize soon enough.

3. (FOUO) With the foregoing as a rather long introduction and basis from which to continue, let me now address the drawdown of the DAO and American Mission.

a. Although the planning for TALON VISE (later FREQUENT WIND) was an ongoing process during my entire time as Defense Attache, the situation which developed at Da Nang and other points down the coast caused some second thoughts concerning some of the provisions of the plan. As an example, one of the prime assumptions, i.e., that RVNAF would provide adequate control and security in the event of an evacuation, came under fire. It was obvious that RVNAF could not be counted on to provide any kind of control and/or security and in fact could become an adversary under panic conditions. Accordingly, it became necessary for further planning to be undertaken. At the DAO we began looking over our internal plans around 1 April 1975. I detached one Army LTC from my Security Assistance Directorate and assigned to him a USMC Major and one NCO from the FPJMT element and two captains (one USA and one USMC) and one NCO from the JCRC element to finalize the DAO plans for assembling our own people, bringing them to the DAO compound and providing for their physical care for five to seven days if necessary. Their planning included a new look at proposed landing zones, a new look at how and where to assemble DAO employees and a new look at how to transport DAO employees from assembly points to the DAO compound. They were also instructed to determine how to house and take care of DAO employees once they arrived at the compound. I directed them to look at all of our resources in order to determine the best method of feeding and housing our people. I directed that food from the commissary be stored within the compound for subsequent use if necessary.

16-8-9

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b. This small group did a magnificent job within a matter of days. Almost overnight food was moved in and stored, C-rations were requisitioned and received, lister bags and other equipment were requisitioned and received, tank trucks with JP-4, diesel and MOCAS were positioned within the compound, a bulldozer and other heavy equipment were parked within the compound on a nightly basis for use if required, auxiliary generators were placed for use in case the main power source was rendered inactive, equipment for outside latrines was built and positioned, additional bunkering materials were put in place, chemicals to convert the water in the swimming pool to a potable condition were secured and put in place, the gymnasium was surveyed and materials were stored to configure it into a processing center with necessary medical facilities, additional telephone lines were installed in critical spots and many other things were done to provide for a quick transition into a viable posture for assisting in the mass evacuation of DAO and other Mission personnel. The planning also included a survey as to the number of US personnel necessary to secure adequately the DAO complex if required. At this point in time I had grave doubts that my local-hire local national guards would be able to provide the requisite security if pressed by RVNAF elements. A message asking for two USMC reinforced companies on a standby basis was dispatched on 2 April 1975. An advance party or survey team was requested at the same time and arrived on or about 7 April 1975. This party validated the requirement my own planning group had established. On 1 April I asked for authority to drawdown the Defense Attache Office. In order that the action could be explained to the JCS, I asked to be directed to reduce the size of the DAO in order to free up additional DAV funds for further immediate help to RVNAF. With this rationale I was able to secure approval for the reduction from Ambassador Martin. Within days authority and guidance were received.

c. On 1 April our Evacuation Control Center (ECC) was opened on a 12 hour per day basis. By 3 April we had gone to a 24 hour operation principally in connection with the refugee operations being controlled by RADM Benton, CINCPAC representative for that purpose. On 4 April the first large shipment of materiel called forward arrived in a C-5A aircraft. The same aircraft departed TSN in the late afternoon loaded with orphans being evacuated to the United States. In attendance were the first DAO employees to be moved out -- some 37 individuals -- mostly women. The C-5A experienced a malfunction while over Vung Tau, returned to TSN and crashed on the approach. All but one of our employees were killed in the crash.

d. I assigned the JCRC element to recover the remains. This operation took several days. DAO personnel also provided significant assistance to the USAF crash damage assessment team which arrived within hours. Our personnel had been processed in the DAO theater and it was this building which we used through 21 April

16-B-10

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for processing of departees.

e. The processing operation was evolutionary in nature. It became evident that despite our best intentions we were not going to be able to move significant Americans from Saigon. C-141 aircraft bringing in materiel were departing with very few passengers. My investigation revealed that many personnel would not leave because of affiliations with local nationals. There were instances where personnel were legally married to local nationals but had not bothered to process the necessary paperwork for exit permission from the RVN. Others had families but had never bothered to marry and of course had no papers at all. Still others were married elsewhere but had additional families in Saigon whom they would not leave. There was no way to secure papers for these people under any circumstances. I advised the Embassy of these situations. Over a period of a week or ten days consulate personnel were able to work out with the Ministry of Interior (MOI) a procedure which materially shortened the processing time for exit permission. Where six months plus had been required, the MOI now promised that it would not take longer than three days. The instrument being used was a Laissez Passe. By this time the American Consulate was using a parole document to provide entry permission for various classes of Vietnamese. With these two documents personnel could be processed and moved by air to Clark AB in the Philippines. It turned out, however, that only one person at the MOI could sign the laissez-passer so the bottleneck remained to a lesser degree than before.

f. By this time the theater had been configured completely for personnel processing. All of the seats had been removed and sufficient desks and other office furniture had been set up to provide for all processing (American Consulate and MOI) to be done on the premises. Once processed, a family was moved by bus to the DAO Annex where plane-sized loads were organized prior to embarking. We still were not moving enough people, however.

g. On 14 April I met with all DAO contractors in an effort to convince them that a concerted effort must be made on their part to have their personnel leave the country. At this meeting the aforementioned processing changes were outlined. Subsequent to the meeting, however, I was called by one contractor advising me that his people would not leave until we somehow could move even those not legally married. On 16 April I met with all retired military personnel of which there were about 250 heads of families. A week before I had stopped their PX and commissary privileges in an attempt to get them on their way out of country. This had had little effect. At the meeting I told them that the only smart thing to do was to leave the country. I advised them that they could return if things got better. Many questions were raised about processing. We advised them of our plans and operations

16-B-11

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with MOI.

h. During this time our best efforts moved fewer than 500 personnel per day. I asked the Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy for some simple way to increase our throughput -- even if we had to resort to smuggling people out without MOI exit permits. During the days previously we had had some covert smuggling carried out by certain DAO employees or by air crews themselves. Emotions were running strong and there was great determination on the part of my American DAO employees that DAO local nationals were not going to be left behind. I had several papers on this problem from various employees -- US employees making pleas for the movement of the local nationals with whom they worked.

i. We were making no progress. Finally, on 19 April, during his visit with Ambassador Martin, Admiral Gayler broached the subject and suggested that a simple piece of paper be used whereby a sponsor could sign an affidavit that personnel he listed were in fact his dependents and that he would be responsible for them after departure from the RVN. Ambassador Martin agreed to the suggestion and before we left the Embassy we drafted up a proposed affidavit form and left it with the Deputy Chief of Mission. That afternoon the form was reproduced and we began to use it.

j. This solved all paperwork problems and left Americans with no further excuse for remaining in country. From 20 April on our numbers of departees grew daily reaching over 6,000 for 27 April. Despite this effort we were not able to get all Americans out of Saigon. I had difficulty getting my own employees to depart. It was only when I threatened to separate anyone who had been directed to depart and had not, that my own ranks began to thin noticeably. There were several reasons for this. My own employees had a great deal of empathy with their local national co-workers and were determined to get as many of them as wanted to go out of the country. Further, those of my employees who had married or had acquired ties with Vietnamese women found it most difficult to get their wives or girl friends to leave without taking the entire family. In some instances they ended up doing just that. Contractor employees were also almost impossible to move unless they desired to go. Once an employee had been separated by the contractor, there was no way that he could be made to depart. The Embassy had no way to force the departure of any non-employed or employed American. I suggested to the Deputy Chief of Mission and later the Ambassador on more than one occasion that the government be asked to declare all Americans not contributing to the country's war or economic efforts persona non grata. They apparently were loathe to do that as long as President Thieu was in office. The Ambassador told me that he would consider it when President Huong had taken over. I do not believe that the subject was ever raised at all. It may have been politically undesirable to do so. My wife

16-B-12

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overheard an American telling another at the bank that he was not going to put up with the standing in lines and paperwork. He was going to wait until the big evacuation then he would bring out whomever he wanted. I am afraid that this feeling was shared by more than one American.

k. As the outmovement of personnel progressed we began to be visited by more and more RVNAF personnel. They were frantic to move their families out of Vietnam. They brought with them all records of their past contacts with Americans to prove that they were high risk personnel. Although few overtures were made by these officers to accompany their families, early in the operation I advised all my personnel that we would not be a party to helping any RVNAF personnel leave the country as long as fighting was going on and the government was still in power. During the week of 20 April, it became apparent that we were not able to control the entrance of RVNAF personnel into our compound and therefore our main office building. This lack of security had several adverse implications so I took two steps. We closed the processing point at the DAO theater and moved all processing to the DAO Annex where we used the gymnasium as the overall processing point. This allowed us to control the entrance of RVNAF personnel much better. We borrowed 16 USMC personnel from the Embassy to help us control personnel being processed. Of necessity I had to close out the beer and liquor outlet in the Annex area in order to preclude any abuse from that direction. As the week progressed, we began losing control again so I asked for a platoon of USMC personnel from the Ground Security Force (GSF). These personnel arrived during the daylight hours of 25 April. They were ferried from the fleet off Vung Tau by Air America helicopters. This made all the difference in the world. There is something about a United States Marine that demands respect from the Vietnamese people. From the time of their arrival on we had and maintained complete control.

l. On or about 1806H on 28 April 1975, the flight line at TSN was bombed by A-37 aircraft. It is supposed that these aircraft most probably came from Phan Rang since VNAF quickly checked and ascertained that all A-37's under their current control were accounted for. Subsequent to the bombing the government imposed a 24 hour curfew. Later that evening I learned of the decision to discontinue the flow of C-141 aircraft into TSN. I was told that 60 sorties of C-130 aircraft could be expected for 29 April. Effective with the bombing of the flight line, the flow of C-130 aircraft was interrupted. In fact, from that time until approximately 0130H 29 April, only three aircraft were inbound. These three carried hot cargo in the form of 15,000 pound bombs. After unloading they were available for passenger loading. Unfortunately, the timing of the rocket attack (0400H, 29 April) precluded such loading and in fact one C-130 was lost to rocket impact. This aircraft burned at TSN that morning.

16-B-13  
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m. As noted above, at about 0400H, 29 April 1975, TSN came under a rather heavy rocket attack. Two United States Marines of the Embassy Armed Guard Detachment who were manning a roadblock in the vicinity of Gate 4 of the DAO compound were killed by one of the first rockets. Another impacted within six feet of Quarters 1 and 2 and blew all occupants of the quarters (14 personnel) out of bed with no injuries. Two other rockets impacted in the DAO Annex. Two Vietnamese suffered light injuries. From that point on the stage for the evacuation was set.

n. In anticipation of moving some 10,000 personnel via the sixty sorties scheduled for 29 April, both the DAO and Embassy compounds had a large number of staged personnel aboard. Had additional C-130 aircraft materialized during the night, there would have been many less personnel in the DAO area. In the DAO processing area there were approximately 2,800 personnel, principally Vietnamese, ready for loading. During the day we would see an input of an additional 2,870, again mostly Vietnamese. Some 395 US citizens would be evacuated out of the total of 4,870 evacuees from the DAO complex. At the Embassy, there were approximately 1,000 personnel at the beginning of the 29th. During the day an additional 1,000 plus would come aboard. These personnel were about 50 percent US citizens. Specifically, of the 2,098 evacuated from the Embassy compound, 978 were US citizens.

o. As of early that morning, the plan was to continue with the fixed wing lift from TSN. It was hoped that we would be able to bring in the C-130 aircraft without undue danger as a result of rocketing. Unfortunately, the rocketing did not materially lessen as the morning progressed. Additionally, VNAF began to get quite restless and, in fact, sometime not long after daylight, VNAF began scrambling their aircraft. We learned later that many flew into Thailand while others proceeded to Con Son Island, or to the US Fleet off Vung Tau. We began to receive reports concerning foreign objects littering the runways at TSN and after having our personnel on the field check and recheck, it became clear that we were not going to be able to use the field for further fixed wing operations. I relayed this information to Ambassador Martin who chose to come out to the DAO compound for a personal look into the matter.

p. After Ambassador Martin arrived, we quickly briefed him on the situation. He, nevertheless, was quite strong in his convictions that we had to move a significant number of Vietnamese that day in order to carry out our commitment to our own employees, the high risk Vietnamese of the government and to RVNAF families. He discussed this with me in great detail and after departing called me from the Embassy and read to me a message from the White House stating that the C-130 lift would continue as long as feasible. At this point in time I was under orders to evacuate the DAO personnel by fixed wing aircraft.

16-B-14

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q. Within an hour I had discussed the problems of the runways at TSN with CINCPAC and had agreed that there was no way that we could continue the fixed wing lift. CINCPAC advised me that he was going to recommend to the JCS the execution of Phase IV of FREQUENT WIND. I called Ambassador Martin and so advised him. After ascertaining I was absolutely sure that there was no way to continue the fixed wing lift, Ambassador Martin agreed that he would call for the rotary wing evacuation. Within the hour the execute message had come through and FREQUENT WIND was in process.

r. The first evacuees departed the DAO compound by Air America helicopter about 1000H. We were unable to move personnel earlier because of lack of aircrews. At the time of the rocketing, Air America had only one pilot available at their compound. As others became available during the morning, additional helicopters were activated and in fact Air America finally moved their operational element to the DAO building since their compound had become untenable as a result of the continued rocketing and VNAF interference. Early in the morning a refueling problem developed for Air America. The only refueling vehicle in their compound required manual pumping and the internal situation there precluded being on the ground long enough to refuel in this manner. Although we had positioned JP-4 in our own compound and on various rooftops which were designated landing zones for the purpose of picking up US personnel stranded in the city, these methods of refueling did not prove satisfactory either. Accordingly, most refueling operations were carried out aboard ship as further personnel were moved from the Saigon area to the fleet. A certain number of Air America helicopters were set down on in-city landing zones to await the movement of personnel to the compound.

s. During the period 0815-1745h, nine convoys of various mixes of buses were used to bring personnel into the DAO compound. The numbers of buses involved varied because from time to time we were directed by Embassy personnel to provide buses for movement of specified personnel. Unfortunately, we thereby lost control of buses which could have been used to pick up additional personnel in the city. Two to five buses remained in the Embassy compound for the better part of the day. I do not believe that we failed to pick up any personnel as a result of this, but we did have convoys moving throughout the city for a longer period than might have been necessary otherwise.

t. We were advised that the fixed wing overhead cover had crossed into Vietnam territory about 1230H. The advance elements of the Ground Security Force (GSF) arrived at the DAO compound by 1350H. Our first heavy lift helicopter arrived with GSF personnel by 1506H. A decision was made prior to this to backload the initial helicopters. This was a change to the published plan, but was a good decision, particularly in consideration of the lateness of the day. Lifts were made from three landing zones in the DAO complex -- one at the Annex, one at the ball field just outside the DAO

16-B-15

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compound and one adjacent to the DAO theater in the tennis court area. The evacuation ran quite smoothly, all things considered. As we began the lift from the Annex area, ARVN airborne troops in an adjacent compound began to cut holes in the separating fence. This required extra effort on the part of the GSF to preclude a large influx of additional personnel. Late in the evening, the remaining personnel in the Annex area were moved by road through the DAO Command Mess area to the landing zone at the ball park. This enabled us to dry up the Annex area rather quickly and thereby close out the operation there.

u. Communications throughout the exercise were outstanding up until on or about 1915H. We were in constant secure voice communications with the NMCC, CINCPAC and USSAG. We also had a constantly open line with USSAG. At about 1915H, the lights in the ECC failed. Emergency power was activated and this quickly reestablished our lighting. However, the loss of power knocked out our out-of-country communications. It turned out that one or more individuals outside the compound had shorted out our power lines using a long pole with a metal conductor on the end. I was advised that it would require at least forty minutes to reestablish communications. By that time the number of DAO personnel was quite small and I could see that within the hour we would be lifted out of the compound. Accordingly, I elected not to make the effort to reestablish communications out-of-country.

v. By 2000H I ordered all remaining DAO personnel to prepare to move and led them aboard two helicopters. We were airborne by 2015H and arrived at the USS Midway by 2055H. Although we were the last DAO personnel in the compound (with the exception of one Federal Electric Corporation employee left behind to assist in the destruction of communications equipment), I learned from the GSF commander that the compound continued to be used up until about 2400H, 29 April. Prior to leaving, communications were patched through for continued intramission use prior to destruction.

4. (FOUO) One final element which deserves special mention concerns the reactivation of the Bird contract.

a. The idea to remove from Vietnam such assets as were acceptable to VNAF and the JGS was a good one. The Ambassador objected to moving anything out of country which was serviceable. I consider his approach reasonable since the country was still engaged in a war of survival and needed all serviceable assets on hand with the possible exception of some of the turbine engines and other high dollar items. Nevertheless, you could not make a good case for moving any serviceable assets out of country. We encountered no problem with the removal of unserviceable assets. As a matter of fact, earlier we had loaded out 30 to 40 mixed

16-B-16

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armored personnel carriers and tanks as well as a large quantity of unserviceable fire control instruments. The bulk of the readily available unserviceable assets belonging to VNAF were at Bien Hoa. At this point in time, on or about 25 April, Bien Hoa was coming under increasing enemy fire -- both rockets and artillery. Nevertheless, the Von Marbod team felt that they would be able to operate out of Bien Hoa despite the enemy fire so the Bird contract was re-initiated. The first C-130 arrived at Bien Hoa on 27 April.

b. During the past several days, the DAO transportation element had built up a backlog of from 85 to 100 pallets of package mail and household goods at TSN for outshipment. We had been able to get one pallet per departing aircraft shipped during this period. The bulk of the pallets had been left behind when the last ship sailed from Newport. On 27 April, one Bird aircraft loaded out pallets. Mr. Von Marbod had agreed to provide us with additional aircraft over the next several days. As it turned out, the shelling of Bien Hoa reached such an intensity on 28 April that Bird was not able to operate there past mid-morning. The aircraft already inbound were made available to DAO to move our palletized mail and household goods to Thailand. In addition, a palletized computer was moved by air that date. Had the Bird contract not been reactivated, all this material would have remained at TSN.

16-B-17

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## Section C

Observations of the Service Attaches1. (FOUO) EXCERPTS FROM THE REPORT OF COLONEL CHARLES G. F. WAHLE, US ARMY, ASSISTANT DEFENSE ATTACHE/ARMY ATTACHE.

a. "From the time of my arrival in Vietnam until January 1975, Emergency and Evacuation (E&E) planning and execution were the responsibility of the Counselor for Administration of the US Embassy ...the only mission the Attache Element had was to provide one liaison officer to the Embassy Evacuation Control Center (ECC) to act as a link between the Embassy and Defense Attache Office (DAO).

b. "The plan specified various alert conditions: white-conditions normal; grey-increased vigilance, avoid large gatherings, and so forth; yellow-remain at residence, pack a bag and be ready to move and; red-report to one of the 29-odd assembly and processing centers. Notification was to be primarily by clear text message over the American Radio System. At the processing centers, passports and visas would be checked and/or issued if necessary, travel pay would be provided and evacuees would be classified into various priorities: old, infirm, pregnant, women with children, single women, able-bodied men and so on. The evacuees would then be moved by bus to DAO or Tan Son Nhut (TSN) for evacuation by air.

c. "The plan envisioned a benign environment and cooperation from local authorities. The only threat envisioned was from terrorists, as in the early 1960's. The plan covered evacuation of U S citizens, their local dependents and other Country Nationals (TCN's) to whom an obligation existed. It did not consider evacuation of Vietnamese (VN) nationals, although I am sure there was an unpublished plan to evacuate a limited number of key VN officials, since this seems to be customary.

d. "After the fall of Phuoc Long Province in January 1975, the Embassy decided to update the E&E plan. The major changes were that the Air Attache (AIRA), COL McCurdy, USAF, was designated the Embassy Air Evacuation Officer and was tasked with preparing the Air Evacuation Annex to the Plan; and the American Legation US Naval Attache (ALUSNA), CAPT Carmody, USN, was designated the Sea Evacuation Officer and was tasked with preparing the Sea Evacuation Annex to the plan. The Counselor for Administration still had overall responsibility for all E&E planning and execution, and the plan still only addressed evacuation of US citizens and designated TCN's. The requirement for the Attache Element to provide a liaison officer was omitted.

16-C-1

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e. "COL McCurdy prepared the Air Evacuation Annex and, in the process, recognized the need for a command and control center with greater capabilities than existed at the Embassy. He therefore established what became the Evacuation Control Center (ECC) in the Old Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) Command Bunker at DAO. The Emergency Command Center at the Embassy became the Alternate ECC. The ECC became operational 1 April 1975.

f. "With the abandonment of the highlands, the loss of I Corps and the imminent loss of Nha Trang, it became obvious that we would ultimately have to evacuate Saigon. In recognition of this, the Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) announced 31 March that Mission personnel had permission to ship voluntarily their dependents home or to a safehaven at government expense and to ship their household goods in advance of orders. No one was ordered to leave. The reason given was that the Ambassador did not want to create a panic as had existed in Da Nang....The Defense Attache (DATT) had previously requested all DAO Division Chiefs to prepare a minimum-essential list which would contain only those people necessary to perform the basic functions necessary to carry the program through the end of the fiscal year....

g. "At 1400H hours, 1 April, COL McCurdy and I were summoned to a meeting with BG Baughn, USAF, the Deputy Defense Attache, along with seven or eight others, among whom were COL Brewster, USAF; CAPT Grigg, USN; COL LeGro, USA; LTC Tobin, USAF and Jim Brown. BG Baughn had us read a ... CINCPAC message containing an estimate that Saigon could be attacked in as little as five days and outlining various evacuation plans that CINCPAC was working on. The message also called for a 'massive thinning out' of the US population in Saigon. BG Baughn tasked the group to have a 'brainstorming' session and to come up with DAO plans to support the CINCPAC plans. I was designated chairman, CAPT Carmody was added to the group and COL Hodges, USA, replaced COL LeGro. The group met that afternoon and worked through the night coming up with outline plans for sea, air and helicopter evacuation, techniques for covertly moving people to the evacuation sites, a series of recommendations for actions to be taken by the DATT on his own authority and other recommendations to be made to the Ambassador. I briefed these recommendations to BG Baughn, RADM's Benton and Oberg and, then, MG Smith. They all concurred and a meeting was held that afternoon, 2 April, chaired by the DCM, Mr. W. Lehmann, and attended by the E&E planner for each of the agencies of the Mission. I again briefed the findings and recommendations of the group. Mr. Lehmann approved recommendations concerning increasing the alert status of the fleet and 7th AF troop carriers and holding

16-C-2

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two to four Military Sealift Command (MSC) ships in Newport. He deferred to the Ambassador decisions on ordering dependents and nonessentials out. (We were informed 3 April that the Ambassador had disapproved this latter recommendation.) At this meeting, it was decided to request Pan American Airlines to increase their flights from one per week to one per day.

h. "Later, I met with Mr. A. A. Francis, former Consul General (CONGEN), Military Region (MR) 1, who announced that he had been tasked by the Ambassador to develop plans for the evacuation of VN Mission employees and other selected VN citizens. We discussed his plans and the lessons learned from Da Nang and I provided LTC Mitchell, USAF, the Assistant AIRA, as a project officer to work with his group.

i. "On 2 April, BG Baughn informed the DAO division chiefs that he was in charge of E&E planning for DAO and that I was to act as his deputy in this effort. The rest of the Attache Element became a full-time planning staff with COL McCurdy becoming more and more an executor as the airlift started to get going.

j. "The period between 2 April and 9 April was spent moving to new offices at DAO, attending endless back-to-back planning and coordination meetings, identifying the innumerable ad hoc groups that had been formed within DAO and the rest of the Mission (all working on one or another aspect of E&E), trying to form some semblance of an E&E organization within DAO, incorporating the elements of Mr. Francis' group into the DAO E&E organization....

k. "This period, 2-9 April, also saw the beginning of the airlift operation that was to effect the 'massive thinning out'. Initially, the Government of Vietnam (GVN) still required passports and exit visas for any VN departing the country whether they were dependents of US nationals or not. This limited the number of US nationals who could depart to those among the 'non essential' who did not have VN dependents. DAO had earlier instituted a Reduction in Force (RIF) program as part of an already planned reorganization and the initial evacuees came from this pool of DAO employees who had been designated to be RIF'd. In anticipation of the requirement to thin out DAO drastically but unobtrusively, MG Smith had requested and obtained exemption from certain Civil Service regulations and thus had authority to issue RIF notices to any employee without prior notification.

l. "Since the thinning out was to be done unobtrusively, the evacuees were sent out on Military Airlift Command (MAC) aircraft that had arrived on cargo hauls. Advantage was taken of the 'Baby Lift' to send out DAO employees as orphan escorts, thus establishing a 'cover' for their departure and concurrently

16-C-3

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providing needed support to the 'Baby Lift'. BG Baughn set quotas of DAO employees to be evacuated that started at 100/day and quickly rose to 200/day. Although the Civilian Personnel Office of DAO did a magnificent job of processing this many people for departure, and even though there was more than enough airlift available, the quotas were not met. People directed to depart simply refused to go and there was no way to force them to go. The major reason for refusing to depart was that many of the people had VN dependents who were without the necessary exit documents. The normal time to process these papers through the GVN was three months. When the problem was recognized, it was repeatedly brought to the attention of the Embassy which then began negotiations with the Ministry of the Interior (MOI) that led to successively looser and looser requirements.

m. "The initial intent of eliminating the restrictions on the departure of VN was to allow the VN families of US nationals to depart and thus clear the way for their US national sponsors to leave Vietnam. While it served this purpose, it also made it possible for other VN to depart under the guise of being 'dependents' of US nationals. This resulted in many Americans coming into Vietnam, some repeatedly, for the sole purpose of collecting a group of VN, declaring them 'dependents' and escorting them out of the country. Some of these Americans acted out of honorable and charitable motivations; others did not.

n. "The DAO took the initiative and assumed a leadership role in the coordination of the Mission E&E planning. This position was tacitly recognized by the DCM and the other agencies. On 9 April, as a result of recommendations from several sources, the Ambassador formalized the arrangement by appointing MG Smith responsible for Mission-wide E&E planning. The written announcement of this responsibility was more limited in scope than was the verbal; however, none challenged the extent of his responsibility and BG Baughn in turn appointed me as his principal assistant for Mission-wide E&E planning. I in turn designated COL McCurdy to replace me as OIC for DAO E&E activities.

o. "On 10 April, BG Baughn chaired the first Mission-wide E&E coordination meeting at which someone was officially in charge. . . . On 11 April, President Ford included in his speech a promise to evacuate VN citizens of various categories. This reinforced and confirmed Ambassadors Martin's public promise to evacuate all US Mission employees. There were some 17,000 employees on the rolls which, using an average of seven family members, equated to 119,000 VN to be evacuated. When the other categories to whom commitments were made were included, the total was approximately

16-C-4

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200,000. None of the existing plans had ever considered evacuating more than a few hundred VN.

p. "On 12 April, BG Baughn departed unexpectedly... and RADM Benton was designated his replacement. RADM Benton was on temporary duty (TDY) to DAO from CINCPAC to oversee the refugee movement.

q. "RADM Benton met with the Ambassador on 12 April and returned to task the Attache Element cum E&E planning staff to develop a plan to evacuate approximately 1,000,000 people that could be briefed to the Ambassador in the next day or two. The concept plan was completed on the morning of 13 April, and the briefing charts were turned over to RADM Benton.

r. "On 14 April, we were tasked to prepare a detailed plan to support the revised TALON VISE options of evacuating 1,500, 3,000, 6,000 and 200,000 people. The plan was to be completed by 16 April to allow RADM Benton to take it to CINCPAC for inclusion in their plans which had to be completed and ready for execution shortly after the 19th when Congress was to report on the supplemental. It was in this plan that the concept of moving evacuees overland to Vung Tau for sea extraction was first included.

s. "As it turned out, the headquarters responsible for developing the plans was the United States Support Activities Group (USSAG) rather than CINCPAC and LTC Tobin was sent to Nakhon Phnom, Thailand, with a copy of our plan to work with the USSAG planners. It was at the 14 April meeting that DAO was given the additional responsibilities of devising notification systems to alert US nationals, TCN's, and the 200,000 potential VN evacuees. The only responsibility retained by the Embassy was to prepare lists by category and priority of VN citizens to be evacuated.

t. " On 17 April, Mr. George Jacobson, Special Assistant to the Ambassador for Field Operations (SAAFO), called a meeting and announced he had been appointed the Ambassador's executive agent for E&E activities.

u. "The period 17-27 April saw the resignation of President Thieu and the increasing conviction on the part of the Embassy staff and many members of DAO that there would be some form of political settlement that would permit an orderly, unopposed departure of the American community.

v. "... almost the entire effort of the Embassy and DAO was concentrated on evacuating as many VN as possible. Many Americans, official and unofficial, remained or were retained in-country for

16-C-5

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the sole purpose of evacuating VN.

w. "In the effort to evacuate as many VN as possible, conditions developed which posed a severe threat to the capability to conduct an emergency evacuation of Americans. In the early stages of the exercise, evacuees were being processed through the theater in the main DAO compound and the gymnasium in the DAO Annex. When it became apparent that large numbers of VN of all descriptions inside the DAO compound posed a security threat, as well as providing a built-in mob control problem inside the compound, the processing through the theater was halted and the assembling of VN inside the compound was prohibited.

x. "Another potentially dangerous situation was the buildup of a significant backlog of 1,000 - 2,000 VN in the Annex area. Again, had we been forced to go to a helicopter extraction of short duration, we would have been faced with a serious crowd control problem. This backlog occurred despite the allocation of quotas to match daily lift capability. The most probable explanation is that the quotas were significantly exceeded by some.

y. "The period 17-27 April also saw a significant change in the nature and volume of the thinning out/evacuation. The President's order to get the official US community below 1,400 caused an acceleration in the thinning out process and resulted in some significant reductions in the various agencies of the Mission. The DAO planning staff had repeatedly pointed out that, despite what the plans said, to wait until the last minutes to try to evacuate 200,000 Vietnamese concurrently with 6,000 US nationals and TSN's was courting disaster. Our oft repeated recommendation to start exfiltrating Vietnamese as early as possible was finally accepted and the evacuation of Mission Vietnamese employees, their families, and the families of Republic of Vietnamese Armed Forces (RVNAF) officers was approved.

z. "The Embassy's success in achieving a virtual elimination of requirements for exit documentation made this course of action feasible. While between 1-20 April only about 500 people had been evacuated by MAC aircraft, the rate picked up dramatically, reaching 3,100/day on the 22d and growing almost 1,000/day until it reached a maximum of 7,100/day on 27 April. During this period, approval was obtained to complete preparation of the tennis court Helicopter Landing Zone (HLZ) and the ball field HLZ in the DAO complex.

aa. "29 April started with a rocket attack on TSN and the DAO compound at 0400H. Around 0630H, MG Smith was ordered to evacuate all DAO personnel. I prepared a message to be telephoned or radioed to each of the assembly points housing DAO personnel and to others that could be reached by telephone.... I instructed CPT Wood, USMC,

16-C-6

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to initiate his bus extraction and, in response to a quest'on, told him that only the DAO was ordered to evacuate, that he was to allow any other American who wanted to come to board the buses and they could explain it to their bosses later. In response to a question from CPT Petrie, USA, as to whether the order included rooftop Helicopter Landing Site (HLS) controllers who happened to be DAO employees, I told him they too were to be evacuated. (While technically correct, in retrospect this was probably a wrong decision on my part). Until the first bus convoy was returning, it was hoped they would go directly to an emplaning site at TSN as called for in COL McCurdy's plan. However, when they were approaching TSN and the C-130 lift had still not resumed, I directed that they bring their passengers to the DAO compound. All other bus convoys did the same.

bb. "Around mid-morning, MG Smith announced that the execution of FREQUENT WIND (formerly TALON VISE), Option IV, had been ordered. I then directed MAJ Sabater, USMC, to deploy his previously selected and trained marshalling area control teams to the four HLZ's within the DAO complex. CPT Petrie, who was to be the Marshalling Area Control Officer (MACO) of the tennis court HLZ was still busy controlling the Air America rooftop extraction effort so I drafted COL Brewster to replace him. The MACO's were ready for a 1300H arrival of the helicopters which, as it turned out, did not arrive until 1500H.

cc. "The rest of the day was spent monitoring the progress of the bus convoys, informing COL McCurdy when the convoys met resistance at the TSN gate so he in turn could pressure LTC Nguu to direct his men to let the buses pass, monitoring the progress of the rooftop extraction and making sure passengers were distributed to each HLZ.

dd. "Lessons learned:

(1) One competent individual must be given the responsibility and necessary authority for E&E activities.

(2) Do not promise to evacuate more TCN's and/or local nationals than you know you can accommodate.

ee. "Disclaimer: This paper was written from memory without access to the various documents it refers to. It doubtless contains errors and omissions of fact and/or chronology. It presents the picture as I saw it which undoubtedly differs from the way others saw it."

16-C-7

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2. (FOUO) EXERPTS FROM THE REPORT OF COLONEL GARVIN MCCURDY, US  
AIR FORCE, AIR ATTACHE

a. "During late January 1975, the US Mission, Vietnam, conducted its routine annual review and update of its Emergency and Evacuation (E&E) Plan. Basically, the plan called for four phases: warning; drawdown; minimum operation of the Mission; and Mission closure. It prescribed four levels of emergency activity: white, normal operation; gray, restricted operation; yellow, hostile activities imminent; and red, hostile or dangerous situation.

b. "The Mission-wide plan was, in fact, a collection of five plans, one for each Military Region (MR) and one for Saigon/Gia Dinh. It was oriented toward extraction of Americans and small numbers of Third Country Nationals (TCN's) and Vietnamese, all told about 6,800 persons. It was the normal responsibility of the Administrative counselor to act as the Ambassador's executive agent in the execution of these plans. However, there was no central organization for coordination of Mission-wide efforts. Some analysis had been done as to availability of ship and air assets. A notification system for American employees of the Mission and assembly points had been designated. Although Helicopter Landing Zones (HLZ's) within the Saigon/Gia Dinh area had been designated ... no control facility existed within the Mission, although a small room within the Embassy building had been designated for the purpose.

c. "Upon reviewing this plan the Air Attache (AIRA) delineated the prospective evacuation tasks into three segments and took action to achieve an organization capable of controlling these. The first task in evacuation would be the movement to other locations in-country .... This was usually thought of in terms of withdrawing to Saigon, but need not be the case. The second task was movement of evacuees out of Vietnam. This again was envisioned primarily as being done from Saigon's Tan Son Nhut (TSN) Airport, but could be done from other locations dictated by the situation. The third task was the notification, assembly and movement of evacuees within Saigon and Gia Dinh to locations where they could be processed for air evacuation. This had to be made feasible for cases where normal movement through the streets was possible, as well as for cases where disorder did not permit such movement. The solution was to establish not one, but two air evacuation control centers. The primary one would be located in the Defense Attache Office (DAO) compound, with the alternate in the Embassy because of considerations of space, proximity to TSN airport and the availability of a number of buildings in the DAO compound for the holding and processing of a realistic number of evacuees.

16-C-8

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The alternate center in the Embassy would provide for control of evacuation of that compound and/or adequate control capability in case the Mission were to retract solely into that compound under the third phase (minimum operations) of the E&E Plan. (Editor's comment: The AIRA was instrumental in organizing the Evacuation Control Center (ECC) which was located in the Command Bunker in Building 5000 (DAO Headquarters) at TSN. He also participated in the organization and operation of the Cambodian rice lift during late February and early March.)

d. "Through the mid-March period, administration of the Cambodian airlift gave way to more urgent requirements. The worsening military situation required increased pressure on readying the ECC and the alternate ECC (at the Embassy). At the Deputy Defense Attache's (Dep DATT) direction, radios for the ECC were obtained from VNAF resources. (Editor's comment: In early April, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) 'Baby Lift' of orphans began. The AIRA's involvement, as well as the activity of the ECC, were to provide a valuable shakedown for later operations).

e. "The Social Assistance Office of USAID had been assigned as the Mission contact for the so-called Voluntary Agencies, or 'VolAgs', attempting to send Vietnamese orphans to homes around the world....A blanket exit permit for 1,400 orphans sponsored by several VolAgs was obtained on 3 April....A tentative request had been placed with the Military Airlift Command (MAC) for availability of air transport through the ECC on 2 April. Groups of orphans were flown out by special flights, and still others were introduced into the (regular) DAO Processing Center and evacuated in that fashion...probably between 1,500 and 2,000 orphans left Viet Nam by MAC aircraft during April 1975. Civil aircraft carried out a like amount. (Editor's comment: By the first of April, the Attache Element focused on accelerating the evacuation of US Mission employees, American as well as other nationalities, and their dependents.)

f. "At the Dep DATT's request, a group chaired by COL Wahle, USA, the Army Attache, brainstormed...the lessons learned from Da Nang and prepared a talking paper for the DATT to discuss with the Ambassador....This talking paper included an evaluation of lessons learned at Da Nang and suggested ways to cut red tape to hasten departure of Vietnamese dependents of Americans. It also contained the recommendation...that the Mission face the task of choosing how many and which Vietnamese it would attempt to evacuate....The Ambassador assigned a task force ...to define the problem

16-C-9

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in broad terms. It commenced work about 5 April and continued collecting lists of: Mission employees and their families; Vietnamese who because of close contact with Americans (particularly in intelligence operations) would be endangered by a communist takeover; key government officials; key officers of the armed forces; and persons whose cooperation would be imperative to smooth, unharassed evacuation operations. The first result of this group's work was that the Mission's planning estimate of persons to be evacuated jumped from the 6,800 of the January E&E Plan to 173,000....(Editor's comment: In the first week of April, the DATT caused a survey to be made which would result in recommendations and actions to provide for physical security of the DAO compound and make the compound self-sustaining and capable of supporting the American population for several days. The problem of assembling and moving Americans from Saigon to the DAO compound would also be studied.)

g. "These tasks were originally set in the context of DAO and DAO personnel, but...they inevitably intermeshed with existing Mission E&E planning. By 1 April, the compound was already being prepared to be self-sustaining. A population density survey of Americans living in downtown Saigon was conducted, and the unwieldiness and lack of relation between the existing transportation plans and locations of HLZ's as compared to where the Americans lived was brought to light. Plans were made to consolidate Americans in buildings which could be adapted to take helicopters on the roof. A detailed plan for HLZ's in the DAO/Air America areas was drawn up to accommodate simultaneous operations of Air America helicopters shuttling downtown, and large helicopters extracting evacuees to ships. Detailed surface evacuation schemes were drawn up using all buses available to the Mission.

h. "On 8 April, the Dep DATT, BG Baughn, was given the Mission evacuation coordination responsibility; the Assistant DATT/Army Attache (Asst DATT/ARMA) became his Chief of Staff for evacuation coordination; the AIRA was placed in charge of overseeing DAO evacuation activities.

i. "The 13 new assembly buildings (versus 22) were adopted and action was taken to 'pioneer' the HLZ's on the rooftops. Fuel was cached on one. The bus deployment and utilization scheme, drawn up in the surface evacuation plan, was implemented. Nightly runs over the bus routes were made to assure no new road blocks or obstacles were installed....Drivers were trained on their runs and slept with the buses at the designated alert locations.

j. "A DAO security force, lightly called 'the militia', was organized; members were chosen from DAO military and civilian

16-C-10

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personnel on the basis of prior military service, proximity of home to the DAO and volunteer status. An alerting scheme was devised and a plan for phasing up the degree of alert depending on the security condition and reliability of the Vietnamese guards was devised. The plan called for a watch and a reaction force on alert to be summoned if required. At this time, also, the details of the interaction of Air America, Mission Warden and the DAO were worked out.

k. "Coordination with the US Marine Ground Security Force (GSF), then afloat, to be inserted with the first wave of helicopters in Option IV began....The GSF brought with it a completely different concept of utilization of available HLZ's than had been planned at DAO. Briefly, their concept was to do most extraction from the Air America area which could accommodate nine large helicopters. However, this required maintaining security of both the DAO compound and Air America and the movement of evacuees held in the DAO compound across the main TSN access road to Air America. After about a day's discussion, the DAO landing zone plan...was adopted with minor variations and final preparations were made. The tennis court backstops and lights were dismantled, the softball diamond was oiled and had obstructions removed, and similar preparations were made at other sites..

l. "The Mission-wide planning, begun under BG Baughn's direction, was largely internal in nature. It attempted to focus on the problems of the DAO drawdown and to integrate activities and outlooks of all Mission elements. An analysis was made, commencing 8 April /using the DAO Auditor's staff/, of the processing of American and Vietnamese dependents ongoing at that time. An initial effort was made to define minimum essential personnel levels first at DAO, then encouraging other Mission organizations to do the same at a Mission-wide meeting on 10 April. Urgings to commence drawdown had begun even earlier. On 3 April, COL Wahle and the AIRA attended a policy meeting chaired by the Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM)....It was at this meeting that the Mission-wide drawdown was commenced without public announcement. There existed a need to decrease strength balanced by the need to avoid creation of panic by too obvious and hasty an exit.

m. "...The greatest problems were in legitimizing the flow of dependents and other Vietnamese. This was done...in three stages: expediting the normal procurement of exit paperwork; obtaining agreement to use laissez-passer documents; and, finally, using parole documents. The laissez-passer was essentially a special passport and expedited exit visa issued by the Vietnamese government. It was useful for Vietnamese dependents of Americans, but could not be extended to other Vietnamese. It was not until the parole

16-C-11

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document was adopted that a large-scale flow of DAO employees, Mission employees, contractor and business employees (and, later, government and armed forces counterparts) could be processed. The parole document was essentially a US-only-permission-to-enter document; no processing was done by the Vietnamese. Originally done only for individuals, it was quickly extended to a blanket format for groups and the authority to sign these documents was given to less specially trained people (e.g., division chiefs in DAO). Upon introduction of parole documents the evacuee outflow jumped rapidly to over 6,000 per day from under 100 per day a week earlier.

n. "Throughout...April the AIRA's prime function was to keep TSN Air Base operating in as near normal fashion as possible. The use of commercial and MAC charter aircraft had always been envisioned as equally important as military airlift because of the Mission's desire to drawdown in a low-key fashion. In the final analysis, commercial and MAC charter played a relatively small role in the evacuation. Although supplemental Pan American flights were laid on from early April, they proved ineffective because full formal clearance requirements remained in effect for their use. Regular commercial flights were usually booked full, but departed 85% empty. The passengers simply had not been able to obtain their exit papers. Because of inherent risk, regular MAC charter flights stopped landing at Saigon on about 10 April. This removed a bit of flexibility to move passengers to both Bangkok and Clark, AB, leaving movement to Clark AB alone, but did not seriously inconvenience the effort. However, the struggle for normalcy paid off in that most airlines conducted business as usual through 26 April.

o. "On 5 April, the US Federal Aviation Agency (FAA) forbade US civil flights into the Saigon Flight Information Region (the air space in which the Vietnamese Directorate of Civil Aviation (DCA) was responsible for control). This shutdown was temporary and originated in the Honolulu Office of FAA in response to incorrect and unverified information that Saigon Center had been rendered inoperative for a period of two hours....Fortunately, foreign airlines did not have time to follow FAA's lead and their service continued uninterrupted....

p. "US commercial aircraft continued normal operation in and out of Saigon through 28 April although most were protected by the indemnification clause of the Civil Reserve Air Fleet Act after about 15 April. Foreign carriers also maintained business as usual.

q. "An important feature in maintaining operations at TSN was the service provided by the 7th AF Supervisor of Airlift (SOA).

16-C-12

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About 2 April, airlifted logistic support of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) increased sharply in response to the visit of the US Army Chief of Staff. Consequently, the 7th AF SOA was supplemented by additional MAC cargo handling personnel from Clark AB. Rice lift operations continued to increase and military transport activity rose from four to six aircraft per day. The SOA also assisted with orphan operations....

r. "As the pace of evacuation operations increased, SOA became involved with arranging the departure of sensitive groups. He was involved, for instance, with the departure of General Cao Van Vien's family and with the expeditious departure of President Thieu on the night of 25 April.

s. "Maintaining evacuation operations at TSN required the complete cooperation of a number of agencies, any of which could have impeded or halted use. TSN was the home base of VNAF and its 5th Air Division. The 5th Air Division was crucial to the operation. Specifically, the cooperation of BG Tien, the Commander of the 5th Air Division, COL Son, the Base Commander, and LTC Nguu, the Deputy Base Commander, who was in charge of overall base security, was required. In the crisis, COL Son failed, leaving only the other two.... Their cooperation was insured about 15 or 16 April through evacuation of their families.

t. "On 19 April, immigration officials held up an aircraft evacuating legitimate Vietnamese dependents of Americans for over two hours with a long and officious inspection. The SOA was finally approached by two of the key officials of the Immigration Branch, a MAJ Tan and a CPT B, who asked to have their families evacuated. He contacted the AIRA for instructions and was given permission to evacuate the two Vietnamese families.

u. "The National Police, who guarded the civilian area of the airport, were approached through contacts with the Chief of National Police, MG Binh. They offered no problems until the crisis of 29 April, when Gate 1 (the gate to the DAO area) was closed to a convoy of nine busloads of Americans and Vietnamese. The buses received warning fire on every approach to the gate. LTC Nguu, then in DAO, made contact with the gate and found that the local police chief and his deputy, a COL Phung and a CPT Hoi, wanted to be evacuated. They were instructed to follow the convoy, alone, to DAO where they would be admitted and evacuated. They did and were.

v. "Gate 1 was usually watched by detachments of the Vietnamese Military Security Service. To assure their cooperation, the family of the Director was evacuated about 22 April. Later the Director, LTC Hiep, was also evacuated.... The DCA was included, as

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well, in the plans for 'cooperative evacuation'. DCA personnel presence was necessary to the proper operation of TSN Air Base for either civil or military aircraft. Therefore, a plan was worked out to detail two shifts to operate the control tower, approach control and center. The families of these crews would be evacuated first. The crews would be included in the withdrawal plan for the 7th AF SOA's group which would depart with the last fixed wing aircraft. Following these first families, the families (less men of draft age) of the other personnel would be evacuated at a rate of 100 people per day. The first families were evacuated together with a senior male member to act as the contact for all DCA evacuees at Guam on 28 April. Unfortunately it was the last group also. The Director and the crews operating the airport were recovered on 29 April and evacuated by helicopter.

w. "In addition to the above, there were units of the Airborne Division stationed on Tan Son Nhut; one group was adjacent to the DAO processing area. It was planned to approach their leaders on 29 April, but the rocket attack and execution of Option IV pre-empted this.

x. "Parole documents were first used on 19 April. First conceived as an Embassy function, the DATT quickly assumed issuing authority and extended it to his division chiefs so that 'blanket clearances' could be made up for DAO local national employees and their families, for families of RVNAF officers, groups of VIP's and for groups of intelligence related Vietnamese. The DATT ordered, and constantly reiterated, that no men of military age should be permitted evacuation.

y. "Without prior warning, on 19 April, the JCS directed that the flow of aircraft be greatly increased, far beyond the number which could be filled. On 20 April, the AIRA spoke to an action officer in JCS J3 after having unsuccessfully tried to moderate the flow of aircraft through the usual contacts. The AIRA indicated that there seemed to be a divergence between Washington's desires and Saigon's capabilities to provide evacuees and to please let the ECC perform its mission of matching airlift flow and evacuee flow. Some let up seemed to result.

z. "This began what the AIRA thinks of as Big Push Week. Only 178 evacuees were moved from 0800H the 19th to 0800H the 20th but, as the parole document system took effect, 500 were moved for the same period ending the 21st, 3,100 on the 22nd, 4,000 on the 23rd, 4,800 on the 24th, 5,400 on the 25th, 6,400 on the 26th, 7,100 on the 27th, and 6,200 on the 28th. (These are the operating figures the AIRA...obtained each morning from the ECC. They are accurate probably within five percent.) Thus, at least 39,000 persons (probably more on the order of 41-42,000, since this total (39,000) lacks the

16-C-14

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number evacuated between 0800H and 1800H on the 28th when the airfield was bombed) were evacuated through TSN in that period. It was a big push and severely strained the evacuee assembly, transportation and processing system.

aa. "The rhythm of each day during that week was governed by two factors: the curfew and the desire to empty the processing area on the DAO Annex just as curfew lifted in the morning. The rationale was that the most desirable time of day to commence Option IV helicopter extraction was dawn, since it left the whole day for helicopter operations. The curfew had been made more restrictive, as the danger to Saigon increased, from 1900H in the evening through 0700H the next morning throughout the period. The result was that the inflow of evacuees began shortly after 0700H as cars and buses began to arrive at the processing area. These people were processed and manifested, went through an anti-hijacking baggage check and were taken to their aircraft.

bb. "Aircraft arrived at a rate of two each hour, C-141's during daylight, C-130's at night. The detailed fragging control of this string of aircraft which originated at Clark AB, was assumed by 7th AF at their command post (BLUE CHIP). It was limited by available parking and the capability of the 7th AF SOA group to load aircraft, the anti-hijacking check crew to inspect baggage, and the available buses and trucks to transport people and their baggage from the processing area to the flight line. Since the planning seating capacity was 7,300 per day, it can be seen that the flow of evacuees only began to match the seat availability the last few days. However, throughout the period, aircraft made up their loads with cargo if not filled with passengers. Also, usually two or three aircraft each day were completely devoted to cargo.

cc. "Throughout this period there was a constant struggle to attempt to reconcile the conflicting requirements and wishes of the myriad organizations. Some organizations early saw the opportunity to evacuate their people and did so in the first or second day. Others, less aggressively led or more concerned with fairness, lagged. Much has been written in the press about the flagrant inequities, of which there were many, particularly in the pressure of the last day. However, a priority and quota system was developed and was followed and did provide consideration for all parties and agencies involved.

dd. "On the 20th, 21st, and 22nd, DAO agencies, if only by their proximity to the activity, provided the preponderance of the evacuees. In fact, other Mission agencies were somewhat unaware

16-C-15

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of the pace and pressure of the activities and responded routinely. This caused ill feelings among other Mission elements, and on the 23rd the Political/Military Section Chief was given the task of allocating quotas. He and the AIRA met and devised a quota system based on the size of the work force of each Mission agency, and which included an arbitrary figure for Vietnamese counterparts, both civil and military. Americans and their dependents were given priority.

ee. "After a day's tentative experimentation, quotas were based on a 6,000 per day [total] figure. Each day, the allocations were 500 Americans and dependents, 3,300 non-DAO Mission local national employees and families, 1,100 DAO local nationals and families, 500 from families of RVNAF officers (without their sponsors, of course), and 500 persons chosen from 'especially sensitive' and government officials categories. The non-DAO and DAO local national figures were reduced to 3,000 and 900 respectively on the basis of experienced 'swelling'.

ff. "Each agency was assigned a code, called a 'input group code', which broke out the organization and whether or not the group was Mission or non-Mission related. For instance, State Department sponsored local national employees were coded STL, the first two letters designating State, the third, local national employee; or FOV for Field Operations, Vietnamese counterpart. It cannot be claimed that the system worked perfectly, but it gave people assurance that their interests were, in fact, being considered, a lesson learned from Da Nang.

gg. "The evacuee figures for the last three big days of the airlift show the struggle to stick to the quotas. The 6,400 on 25 and 26 April is deceptive since discipline was not being observed. In fact on the morning of the 26th, the backlog in the processing area and other known locations was such that neither cargo nor new inputs were accepted. The 7,100 figure for the 26th and 27th was the drawdown of the backlog. This enabled the quotas to be adjusted and issued that evening for two days later. The 6,200 for the 27th and 28th represents the quota system in full, and a fairly well-disciplined operation. If conditions had permitted, the quota would have been adjusted upwards that evening to 6,500 or 7,000 for the 30th. There was no 30th [for DAO].

hh. "The participation of the non-DAO agencies that had lagged on the 21st and 22nd required the evolution of a 'downtown organization' to notify, collect and transport their groups. The AIRA was able to assist in its organization and integration with the system at DAO. In a meeting at the Embassy on the 24th to explain the quotas and input codes to the evacuation coordinators of the non-DAO Mission organizations, it became clear that [the alternate ECC was required]. The downtown ECC was activated

16-C-16

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as 'ECC ALPHA'.

ii. "The air attack on the evening of 28 April, followed by the rocket attack on the morning of the 29th, foreclosed the possibility of fixed wing evacuation. Runways were closed; ramps were under fire; aircraft and buildings at the airfield were burning.

jj. "With the closure of the airfield, it was decided to implement Option IV of FREQUENT WIND. BG Carey, commander of the extraction force [Commanding General, 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade], arrived about 1300H and the helicopters with the GSF arrived at a little after 1500H.

kk. "Air America was used to pick up people from rooftop landing zones and thus supplemented the buses which were bringing evacuees to Tan Son Nhut. As the day went on the one major defect of the contingency planning appeared: the jet fuel in the DAO compound could not be used because the tank truck could not be started. Consequently, the Air America helicopters had to cycle to the fleet for fuel. In so doing they carried evacuees.

ll. "The AIRA was among the members of the DAO staff who departed with the DATT at 2000H hrs and [were] recovered aboard the USS Midway."

3. (FOUO) EXCERPTS FROM THE REPORT OF CAPTAIN CORNELIUS J. CARMODY, JR., US NAVY, AMERICAN LEGATION US NAVAL ATTACHE.

a. "During the many modifications and reworkings of the plans for the four options for FREQUENT WIND, the question of the use of sealift for evacuation came up over and over again. Though the American Legation US Naval Attache (ALUSNA) developed numerous plans for different numbers of evacuees...it was generally recognized that, regardless of the precise figure, a grand-scale evacuation of Local Nationals (LN's) could not take place without sealift.

b. "...plans developed principally by the ALUSNA called for evacuation through the Newport complex by three merchant ships (which would carry at least 7,000 each) and two LST's (which would carry 4,000 each), approximately 30,000 people. This was to be accomplished with security provided by Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) troops who lived and worked in the port area and would include evacuation of their families in order to impel their loyal services....The ALUSNA was pessimistic... on the chances of

16-C-17

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people whereas the USMC probably would have. Once again, these arrangements and understandings proved to be non-operative since an across-the-beach evacuation from Vung Tau never took place.

f. "Shortly after arriving at the ECC ~~on~~ 29 April the ALUSNA was advised that RADM's Oberg and Benton were departing ....RADM Benton advised that Operational Control (OpCon) of remaining military sealift assets...were turned over to the ALUSNA. Remaining assets consisted of tugs and barges, since all deep draft ships had sailed about three days prior....The situation in the Newport area remained calm and stable throughout most of the morning....US Embassy buses were enroute to Newport with Americans and LN's. Security was maintained by the local Government of Vietnam (GVN) forces. The buses were forced back by crowds on the highway. ALUSNA, therefore, authorized the loading of the LST....The LST sailed at about 1500H.

g. "Since a crowd was developing outside of Newport, and since no control could be exercised over it any longer, ALUSNA then ordered the three tugs and four barges remaining at Newport to sail, but to stop at the Khanh Hoi docks to see if any American controlled buses containing evacuees might be in the area. The first tug and barge arrived at about 1530H in the afternoon and found a large, unruly crowd on the docks. After making an approach to tie up he decided that he would be overwhelmed and, therefore, pulled away and remained in midstream somewhat downstream and out of sight. About one-half to three-quarters of an hour later the second tug, towing two barges, arrived on the scene and found no crowd at all, it apparently having dispersed to look for another way out since it did not appear that barges would come in. This second tug with two barges eventually loaded some 6,000 people in a quiet and orderly fashion, after calling to request additional evacuees since there were so few available in the area. Eventually enough people to make up the 6,000 capacity were admitted through the gates into the port area and boarded the barges. The tug requested and received permission to sail at about 1715H in the afternoon. It was learned later that their trip down the river to the sea was uneventful with the exception of some small arms fire in the vicinity of Quatre Bras."

16-C-19

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## Section D

### Special Planning Group Activities

#### 1. (FOUO) GENERAL.

a. During the latter part of March 1975, it became evident that the military situation in Vietnam was rapidly deteriorating. The Defense Attache (DATT), Vietnam, realizing that Defense Attache Office (DAO) employees and facilities would be in jeopardy, directed that an office be established to plan for any eventuality that could arise from the fighting that was sweeping South Vietnam. To this end, the Special Assistant to the DATT (COL E. R. Howard, Jr., USMC) was tasked to make preparations for the safety of personnel and property and for evacuation from Vietnam. As the situation continued to worsen, and the realization grew that an evacuation was imminent, it became apparent that a small planning group should be established with full-time emphasis on evacuation related problems. A Marine Corps naval aviator was provided from the 3rd Marine Division in Japan (Okinawa) to supplement the planning group and provide expertise in matters related to air operations. This small group of officers formed what was designated the DAO Special Planning Group (SPG) for the emergency evacuation of Saigon.

b. The group was chartered to prepare the DAO complex as a defensible full-scale transient facility capable of maintaining and processing thousands of persons prior to their evacuation (during the actual evacuation, the compound processed over 40,000 evacuees and maintained an average overnight population of 2,500).

c. As the communists continued their successful march towards Saigon, and an evacuation became more probable, the SPG expanded its charter to include the planning and execution associated with the movement of US citizens, Third Country Nationals (TCN's), and certain selected Local Nationals (LN's) from metropolitan Saigon to the DAO complex at Tan Son Nhut (TSN) airfield. An elaborate coordinated surface extraction plan was developed to be executed in conjunction with a rooftop helicopter extraction plan. Planning for both options called for a detailed interface with the US Embassy Security Office and its subordinate agency, the Mission Warden's Office, Air America, and Mission-wide transportation officers.

d. A self-defense force was established with a built-in capability to augment that force, as required. Such augmentation ran the gamut from simply bolstering the assigned Mission Warden forces, to forming a fully independent force of US citizen volunteers, military and civilian. This force would remain in place until it was relieved by the US Marine Ground Security Force (GSF) of the 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade (9th MAB). Although the plan was viable and flexible, it was overcome by the extremely fast moving situation

16-D-1

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in Vietnam. The DAO drawdown, as well as the designation of many security force members as nonessential, made it almost impossible to maintain any continuity in security force manning. In addition to this planned volunteer force, eight marines, members of the US Embassy Security Guard Detachment, who had previously been assigned to Da Nang and Nha Trang, were assigned to DAO for a period of six days. This original marine contingent was replaced by another 13-man marine element assigned to the US Embassy, Saigon, which remained on post at DAO until relieved by the GSF.

e. On 29 April 1975, at about 1230H, Operation FREQUENT WIND was executed. Up to that time over 40,000 persons had been evacuated by fixed wing aircraft through the DAO complex to various locations outside of Vietnam. On 29 April, some 4,500 persons were moved from Saigon to DAO using both surface and helicopter extraction plans.

f. This section outlines in detail those functions performed by the DAO SPG. Dates and numbers are included to the extent that they can be recalled.

### 2. (FOUO) DAO COMPLEX PREPARATION, "PROJECT ALAMO."

#### a. Planning.

(1) On 1 April 1975, the SPG received instructions to prepare the DAO compound and its adjacent annex as a refugee/evacuee transient facility with the ability to sustain a small evacuee population of 1,500 persons for a period not to exceed five days. By 3 April, that initial general guidance was expanded by the SPG and translated into a mission statement calling in part for "...the maintenance of a resident population of 1,500 persons for five days within a self-sustaining compound." On that date, as a result of continuing inability to obtain the numbers and locations of US civilians and TCN's to be included in emergency US evacuation, it was decided to begin preparing the compound in accordance with the initial guidance and, simultaneously, to build in a capability to expand quickly its support ability in the event the number of actual evacuees should exceed that given in the guidance. Excerpts from the initial rough planning document identifying areas of concern and essential elements of information are in subparagraph 2e beginning on page 16-D-6 .

(2) Immediately following the decision of 3 April to begin initial preparations, a series of organizational conferences were held by CPT A. A. Wood, USMC, with all required department heads for the identification of long lead time items as well as short-term requirements, and assignment of responsibilities (long lead time requirements were defined as preparations requiring more than five days to complete, such as the sense of urgency). By 4 April,

16-D-2

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initial decisions on all major functional areas and basic requirements necessary to support the concept were complete. Civilian managers were appointed to work under SPG direction in the following functional areas: Billeting, under Ms. Sally Vinyard, included the identification of existing facilities, stocks, and modifications required to meet planned capacity; Medical, under Dr. L. H. Streaker, MD, included location of facilities, type and amount of supplies required, manning requirements, and special functions anticipated in support of refugee maintenance (e.g., infant diseases and pregnancies); Sanitation, under Dr. G. Beck, DVM, included numbers and locations of expedient diesel sanitary facilities, health inspection, rodent control, mess inspection, and manpower necessary to execute these functions; Facilities Engineering, under Mr. L. Allen, included all aspects of construction and modification necessary to implement the plan; Transportation, under Mr. J. Edwards, included central dispatching and pooling in support of all other functional requirements as well as pickup and transport of incoming supplies in support of Project ALAMO; Warehousing/Logistics, under Mr. P. Malnich, included selection and preparation of storage facilities for POL, ammunition, other explosives, pyrotechnics, waste dumps, subsistence stocks, and issue/receipt procedures for accountability; Traffic Control, under Mr. P. Baker, included routing of vehicular and foot traffic in both DAO compounds, establishing traffic control points, vehicle disposal, manpower requirements for enforcement, and facility engineering actions to insure this program complemented and supported all other functional areas.

(3) Another conference was held on the evening of 3 April to establish a task force whose mission was to identify locations and densities of the US and TCN evacuee population within metropolitan Saigon. That information was absolutely crucial to the preparation of the DAO compound for an expanded refugee population as well as to all subsequent air and surface planning executed by the SPG in support of the US evacuation. As a result of that conference, a Mission-wide task force composed of representatives from USAID, USIS, DAO, State, and the various civilian contractors was established within the SPG offices. Working continuously, the task force completed a population density plot of US citizens and TCN's on 7 April which accounted for 7,000 persons by number and location. This plot, continually updated, assumed increasing importance as the basis for surface and air evacuation planning by the SPG as well as for the expansion of the Project ALAMO concept. Accordingly, support capabilities, and preparations within the DAO complex were revised to provide for the support of 5,000 persons, instead of the original 1,500, for five days without resupply or outside services.

b. Preparation.

(1) Twenty-nine civilian managers and principal assistants

16-D-3

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working under SPG cognizance labored around-the-clock to complete the compound preparations. Whenever possible, existing organizational structures within DAO were used. In some cases, such as subsistence and sanitation, several organizations were pooled and streamlined to satisfy the wider scope of the emergency preparations. Equally important was the cooperation and logistic assistance of commands throughout the Pacific in flying in over six C-141 loads of equipment and supplies in support of that crash program.

(2) On 16 April, Project ALAMO was complete in all major respects. Over 250,000 gallons of potable water in both permanent and portable storage were in place. Some 180,000 gallons of POL, and 190,000 meals in both refrigerated and dry storage were stockpiled. All power generation facilities had been duplicated, and the electrical grid modified to provide for immediate introduction of standby generators. Buildings were modified, stocks pre-positioned and sanitary facilities emplaced to support a resident evacuee population of up to 5,000 persons on a daily basis. Concertina and barbed wire were stockpiled in key locations in support of barrier and crowd control planning and over 40 portable steel barriers with attached concertina were constructed and ready for use. After construction of storage bunkers, quantities of weapons, pyrotechnics, explosives and riot control agents as well as individual protective equipment were positioned.

### c. Execution.

(1) The impact of these preparations on the relatively unexpected influx of refugees which started on 19 April was profound. Although the facilities had been prepared initially in accordance with a concept envisioning their use primarily by US citizens and TCN's, they supported a resident refugee population within the DAO compound which reached over 6,500 persons at its height, and enabled the DAO to sustain and process expeditiously an extraordinary stream of men, women and children which continued through final evacuation on 29 April. In ten days of refugee/evacuee support, 20-29 April, a combination of SPG personnel supplemented by volunteer labor recruited from among the refugee population was employed to manage the DAO complex. Evacuee working parties, under Ms. Vinyard's direction, were tasked to assist in cleaning and in positioning supplies in the large, 2,500 person, "Dodge City" billeting facility. The old MACV mess hall in that same facility was reequipped in 24 hours to include propane, electrical, and plumbing installations to support its operation as a limited mass feeding facility. Subsistence operations had been planned to employ the DAO Exchange Cafeteria, Command Mess and the MACV mess hall (the last primarily as a distribution point) as the major components of subsistence support. Accordingly, the Command Mess was provided a doubled propane storage capacity and increased

16-D-4

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potable water storage. Two vans dedicated to food distribution were assigned, and the system began operating on 20 April.

(2) The operation proceeded relatively smoothly until 26 April at which point Command Mess facilities were overstrained by the increasing subsistence requirements. To compensate, the "Dodge City" mess hall was heavily reinforced with additional "pop-top" canned food stocks previously flown in for the purpose and two new food distribution points established near the Evacuation Processing Center (EPC). C-rations were extensively consumed from the 3,000 cases stockpiled earlier in support of the concept.

(3) On 27 April, CPT Wood and CPT G. W. Petrie, Jr., USA, were ordered to devote full-time to the metropolitan Saigon extraction plan and to turn over internal compound responsibilities for evacuee support to COL P. G. Martin, USA, and COL P. S. Hurd, USA.

(4) Problems encountered in completing Project ALAMO included the continuing requirement for key functional managers to discharge full-time emergency preparations while simultaneously discharging normal daily responsibilities within the DAO.

(5) A second difficulty common to all areas of preparation was the requirement to postpone vital preparations (e.g., digging indirect fire shelter trenches, final Helicopter Landing Zone (HLZ) preparation, and placement of barriers and concertina) in order not to alarm the populace.

(6) The last major difficulty involved adequate staffing. Everyone, military and civilian, was holding down at least two full-time jobs and none of the major functional areas were near adequately staffed for the emergency effort due to unavoidable personnel drawdowns and double responsibilities.

### d. Evacuee Processing.

(1) Parallel to preparation of Project ALAMO, and as a result of instructions received on 2 April, the SPG was additionally tasked to establish an EPC for processing a large number of US citizens and TCN's in the event an evacuation of Saigon later became necessary. Because of its excellent and extensive facilities for this type of operation, the gymnasium area of the DAO Annex was selected.

(2) Initially, CPT Petrie completed a survey of the area to determine the physical layout for an EPC which would encompass the facilities and functions necessary to support the evacuation of up to 5,000 persons each day. The plan was then drawn up and presented to COL C. G. F. Wahle, USA, the Army Attache, and

16-D-5

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COL Howard, and approved on 4 April. The EPC layout is shown in Figure 16-D-1 on page 16-D-7. Following approval of the plan, supplies and equipment to support the EPC were procured and stored in the gymnasium storage area prior to the activation of the EPC on 20 April.

(3) On 4 April, the initial supervision of the EPC was delegated to COL J.F. Farnham, USAF, Chief JCRC/Liaison, and preparations were begun to implement the plan. On 20 April, the EPC was fully activated to support the evacuation of Saigon and other regions of South Vietnam. At that time, supervision of the manifesting section of the EPC was passed to Mr. H.B. Hicks, Jr., Chief, Personnel Division, DAO. The passenger load building, baggage checking, and movement to the flight line were under the joint supervision of LTC J.F. Hilgenberg, USAF and LCDR P.A. Bondi, USN. From 20-29 April, over 40,000 persons were processed through the center.

(4) The major problem encountered was that the EPC had not been designed to accommodate the numbers of evacuees it eventually handled. There were not enough people within the DAO and Embassy proper to exercise other than light control over the processing. Only through the unceasing efforts of a few individuals was the mission accomplished successfully.

e. Excerpts from the Planning Document used by SPG to identify areas of concern and essential elements of information.

(1) Concept of Operations.

(a) Logistic planning is based on the following tentative concept: emergency evacuation of DAO personnel from billeting to the DAO within 96 hours, and subsequent maintenance of a population of 1,500 persons for five days within the compound prior to evacuation out-of-country.

(b) The concept divides itself into three phases.

1 Evacuation from existing billeting to the DAO compound.

2 Maintenance of the evacuees within the compound.

3 Evacuation out-of-country.

(c) Phases.

1 Evacuation Phase.

a What are the specific locations and numbers of DAO personnel and their dependents?

b What are the personnel priorities for evacuation?

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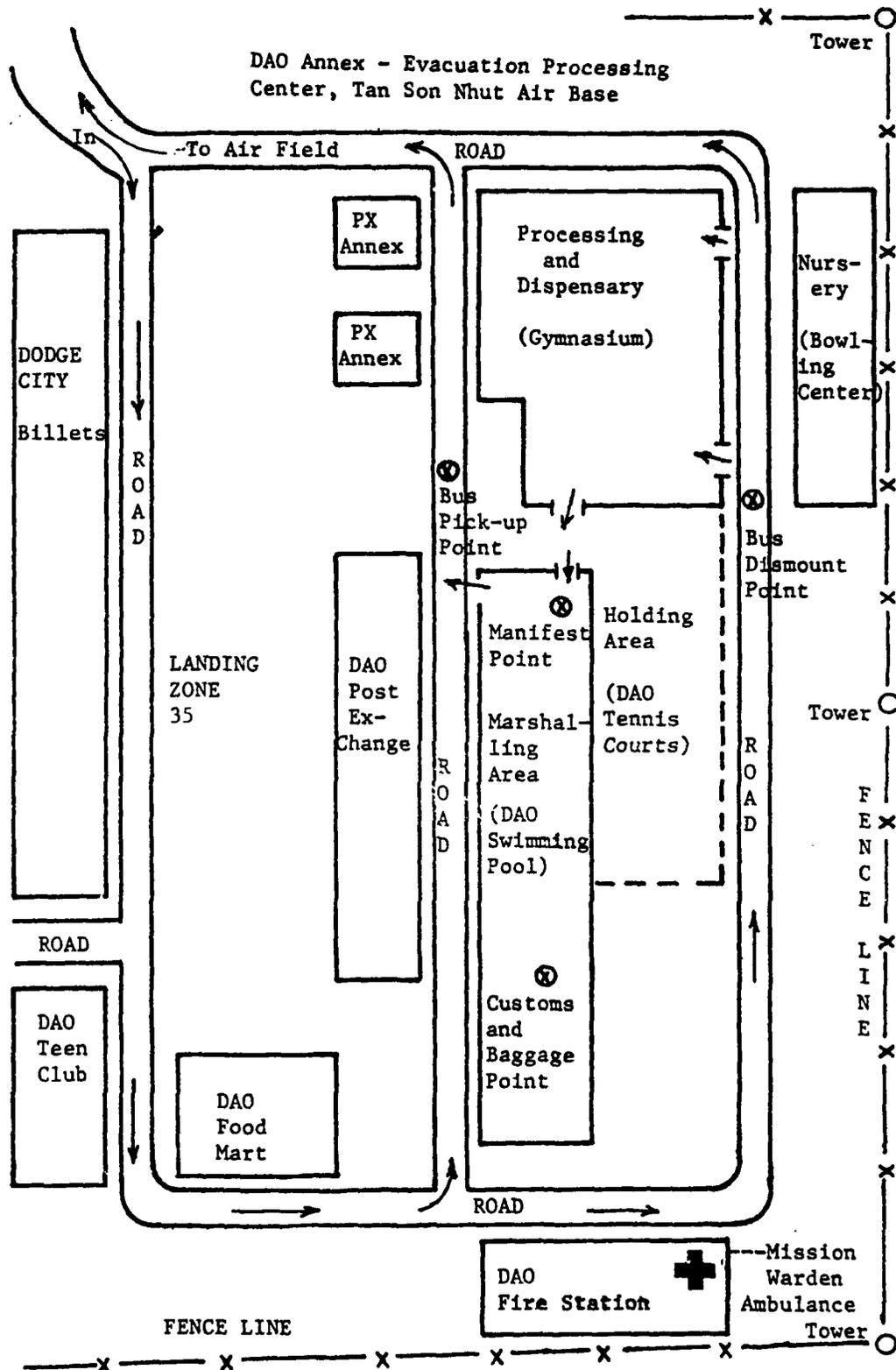


Figure 16-D-1

16-D-7

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c What are the means of evacuation?

- Vehicles? Number and type?
- Sufficient US drivers?

d What stocks are presently positioned in billets for subsistence prior to effecting evacuation? Are they sufficient? For how long? Are additional stocks required? Where?

e What stocks are presently committed to DAO use out-of-country?

f What items will be permitted transport with the evacuees to DAO?

g If there is a choice, what hours are most suitable for evacuation?

h What surface routes?

i What special conveyances and/or services will be required for the sick in Saigon?

j Convoy or single vehicle mode? Combination?

k What method for notification will be employed? Code? Division into sectors? Telephones/radio out?

l Role of building wardens in supervising evacuation? Duties?

m Contingencies:

- Chopper standby for vehicles blocked en route? AAA threat to choppers?
- What billets have chopper capability?
- Can choppers fly low-level within the city? GVN regulations?
- Alternate evacuation plan if disruption within Saigon precludes surface vehicle evacuation?

n Vehicle control? Radios for buses? Can present taxi radios be installed? By when? If not, are sufficient tactical radios on hand?

o What are logical choke points? Bridges? Municipal facilities? Markets?

16-D-8

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p Could permission be secured quickly in the event that evacuation during darkness, and after curfew, was desirable?

### 2 Maintenance phase.

#### a Billeting:

- What are existing facilities and condition?
- What emergency repairs are required?
- What bedding material is required? Where is it? When will it be here?
- What is present lighting capability? Coleman lantern availability?
- Billeting by sex? By evacuation priority/order? Indirect fire shelters?

#### b Sanitation:

- Waste disposal with sewers out? Availability of four-holers with diesel drums?
- Field shower unit availability? Can non potable water be used?
- Proximity to billeting?
- Soap/toilet paper/towels stocks? Where? How many? When here?
- How many personnel healthfully per billet?
- Any problems with rat infestation in deserted structures?

#### c Subsistence:

- What type meals will be easiest to provide?
- How many per day?
- What are existing stocks to support meal concept? Where are they? When will they be here? How much contingency backup is required? Where will food stocks be stored?
- What facilities for food preparation will be required?

16-D-9

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What additional assets not now in the compound are needed? Where are they? When will they be delivered?

- What is best method to dispense meals?
- Special/infant stocks?
- Utensil requirements?
- Trash disposal? Garbage and health hazards?

d Control in maintenance phase:

- Tight movement control; cordoned areas?
- Assignment of "hut mayors"?
- Guides to and from evacuation point?
- Meal schedules?
- Working parties to maintain services?
- Assigned children's areas near billeting?

e Support facilities:

- Electrical system support; total number of generators by type, capacity, fuel requirement, and location?
- Requirements for emergency generator backup to key operational and logistic centers? Medical requirement?
- Total existing potable water storage capacity? Adequate to anticipated requirements? Where and when will additional assets be secured? Where are best locations? Special pumps required? Hand pump availability?

3 Evacuation out-of-country phase:

- a Means? Rotary? Fixed wing? Combination?
- b HLS locations and control?
- c Evacuation assemblage and control?
  - Surface transport to TSN?
  - Special equipment required? Radios? Markers? Cordon

16-D-10

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rope? Panels? Wands?

- Manifesting procedure and accountability?

### 3. (FOUO) SECURITY PROGRAM, DAO COMPOUND AND ANNEX

a. General. In conjunction with the preparation of the DAO complex to maintain and process evacuees, a security program was designed to provide an effective defense force. The Mission Warden Security Force, tasked with normal day-to-day physical security responsibilities, was inadequately manned, trained and equipped for providing security during an evacuation. The Mission Warden Security Force assigned to the DAO complex consisted of four US supervisors and about 39 LN's who manned fixed posts and roving patrols within the compound and Annex area. Three LN dog handler teams patrolled the Annex area at night. No LN sentries were armed; almost all were retired Vietnamese soldiers who, in general, were viewed only as gate openers or pass checkers. Experience from Da Nang and Nha Trang indicated that the probability of their remaining on post without US backup during a period of mob action and/or direct enemy assault was low.

#### b. Concept of Security Operations.

(1) The security concept involved a volunteer civilian and military force. Recruitment was from within DAO resources; those recruited and assigned were senior civilian employees with prior military service and, because of the lack of enlisted men or junior officers assigned to DAO, colonels and lieutenant colonels. This force was supplemented by an eight-man marine contingent consisting of the Marine Security Guards who had previously been assigned to the US Consulates at Da Nang and Nha Trang. The concept envisioned two reaction squads, one consisting of 10 officers billeted in the DAO Command Mess trailer area and the eight-man Marine Security Guard contingent. These reaction forces were on 24-hour call. Additionally, a 15-man reaction force, consisting of army communicators assigned to the satellite communications system, could be used as backup if needed.

(2) As the established security conditions (white, grey, yellow, red) changed from security condition white (normal), designated security force members would be called into DAO either as standby forces or to actually supplement the Mission Warden guards. The number of persons alerted increased as security conditions worsened until a 50-man US force was in position manning all gates, towers and bunkers.

(3) Although the concept was sound and flexible enough to provide at least minimum essential security, the rapidly deteriorating situation finally precluded employment of this volunteer

16-D-11

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force. As DAO underwent an expected drawdown and individuals assigned to the security force were declared nonessential, it became almost impossible to retain any continuity in the force.

(4) On 19 April, a 13-man US Embassy Marine Security Guard detachment was provided DAO to replace the existing marine force. As the situation continued to worsen, consideration was given to having a platoon of marines from the 9th MAB brought ashore to provide additional security. Ultimately a platoon was provided. It remained until relieved by the 9th MAB GSF on 29 April.

#### 4. (FOUO) AIR EXTRACTION FROM METROPOLITAN SAIGON

##### a. Initial planning and preparation.

(1) The SPG determined that an air movement plan was needed to complement the surface movement from metropolitan Saigon. Both of these schemes would be incorporated into a single evacuation program for the downtown area and would be designed to move US citizens, TCN's and selected Vietnamese from downtown Saigon and its suburbs to the DAO compound at TSN for further evacuation out-of-country. The plan was designed for execution under emergency conditions. The air program, ideally executed at first light, would serve as a mop-up following an after curfew surface extraction. CPT Petrie was tasked with the responsibility for the air program within the overall extraction plan.

(2) Initially, Helicopter Landing Zones (HLZ's) which were part of the extant US Embassy evacuation plan were studied. Those HLZ's were on the ground, spotted throughout Saigon at five or six locations. The major problem at each of those locations was that of security; one could foresee a situation in which large crowds of anxious civilians would be attempting to get on the aircraft conducting the extraction. That situation occurred in earlier evacuations throughout Vietnam and, based on those experiences, it was determined that ground level HLZ's would not be tenable if the situation in the city warranted emergency evacuation.

(3) The most feasible scheme for airlifting persons from the city with any degree of safety and control would use rooftops of US leased buildings over four stories high as Helicopter Landing Sites (HLS's). An initial survey was conducted on 6 April of 37 buildings located throughout metropolitan Saigon. The objective of the survey, conducted by CPT Petrie, SFC Maurice Brakeman, USA, Operations Sergeant, and Mr. Allen Bauch, Mission Warden's Office, was to select those buildings which had rooftops which could be used as HLS's and also to determine which helicopters could be used in each of the selected HLS's; CH-53's and CH-46's were available from Task Force 76 while various models of UH-1's were available

16-D-12

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from Air America, Inc. The criteria used by the survey team to select the HLS buildings were:

- (a) Sufficient obstacle-free space on the roof to allow a helicopter to land and take off safely.
- (b) Rooftops strong enough to support the weight of the specific helicopters used.
- (c) Access to the rooftop HLS that could be easily traversed by women, children or disabled evacuees.
- (d) Outside areas, first floors and stairwells relatively easy to secure; i.e., by employing a minimum of security personnel.
- (e) Aircraft ingress/egress routes clear of obstacles.
- (f) HLS's so located throughout the city that the larger US population concentrations were covered.

(4) Thirteen buildings were selected which met the criteria. However, none of the buildings had the capability to accept either CH-53's or CH-46's; first, the rooftops would not take the landing weight of either aircraft (CH-53 maximum landing weight is 42,000 pounds, while the CH-46 maximum landing weight is 23,500 pounds); second, none of the rooftops had enough rotor clearance for either of those aircraft. However, all of the rooftops selected were capable of accepting UH-1's. As a result of this determination, Air America was requested to furnish the SPG a pilot to assist in making a more detailed survey of the 13 selected rooftops. On 7 April, the survey team, accompanied by Captain Nikki Fillipi, Air America pilot/operations officer, and Mr. Fred Dwyer, a retired civil engineer who had volunteered his services, conducted another survey. All 13 of the rooftops were approved for use; however, minor modifications had to be made to each of them before a helicopter could be safely landed and accept passengers. In addition, two of the rooftops were barely satisfactory, for safety reasons, but could be used in an emergency; both of those HLS's needed ladders emplaced to give the passengers easier access to the helicopters. The following locations within metropolitan Saigon were selected as HLS's:

- Landing Site 21 - 35A Ben Chuong Duong Street
- Landing Site 22 - 3 Phan Van Dat Street
- Landing Site 23 - 6 Chien Si Circle
- Landing Site 24 - 196 Hong Thap Tu Street
- Landing Site 25 - 83 Le Van Duyet Street
- Landing Site 26 - 71 Le Van Duyet Street
- Landing Site 27 - 123 Doan Thi Diem Street

16-D-13

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Landing Site 28 - 14 Tran Quy Cap Street  
Landing Site 29 - 22 Gia Long Street  
Landing Site 30 - 192 Cong Ly Street  
Landing Site 31 - 16/1 Hoang Dieu Street  
Landing Site 32 - 259 Truong Quoc Dung Street  
Landing Site 33 - US Embassy Chancery Building

(5) On 8 April, a plan was developed by the SPG, based on those HLS's, for the emergency air evacuation from downtown Saigon. That plan incorporated the HLS's into the overall evacuation plan and was designed to complement the surface evacuation plan purely as a mop-up operation. Air America was requested to furnish the helicopters and required pilots. That request was approved by the senior official of Air America and Captain Fillipi was permanently attached to the SPG as one of two SPG air operations officers.

(6) As of 8 April, Air America had 28 UH-1's (with maintenance capability for putting 24 of those in the air at any given time) and 34 rated pilots (31 line pilots and three operations officers/pilots). On 9 April, all Air America employees, including the pilots, were gathered together by the Executive Vice President of Air America and briefed concerning their participation in the program. Each was given the option either to resign or to agree to remain in Vietnam until the culmination of the project. The deadline for decision was 11 April; by then, all but three of the rated pilots had agreed to stay, leaving a total of 31 pilots. The number of pilots available required that all the helicopters would have to be flown single-seat ; i.e., one pilot. Although that involved some degree of risk, it had been an accepted method of flying for Air America and none of the pilots seemed to have any reservations concerning that aspect of the plan.

(7) On 8 April, SPG members briefed COL Wahle, the Army Attache and the DATT's principal assistant for Mission-wide emergency and evacuation planning, on the combined surface and air evacuation plans for downtown Saigon, receiving approval to prepare for implementing the plans.

(8) Captain Fillipi and 1LT Robert G. Twigger, USMC, 1st Battalion, 4th Marines, 3rd Marine Division, who had been assigned as Air Liaison Officer, began planning the detailed air traffic control system which would insure coordination between Air America and USMC air operations.

(a) The DAO complex was surveyed for possible HLZ's on 7 April, and six were selected for use within the main DAO compound and the DAO Annex. Those six HLZ's were capable of accommodating a total

16-D-14

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of 12 CH-53's simultaneously, as desired by the 9th MAB. All of the HLZ's were photographed from the ground and air, and the engineering requirements necessary to modify the areas selected as HLZ's were levied on Pacific Architects and Engineers, Inc. (PA&E) for completion.

(b) The DAO HLZ traffic pattern and the TSN airdrome traffic pattern were integrated. Both incorporated known helicopter checkpoints and routes used for a decade by Air America pilots; e.g., "Newport", "Keyhole", "Villa 5", and Phu Lam routes. Those checkpoints were known by the air traffic controllers and the populace and did not conflict with the Instrument Landing System (ILS) or other traffic patterns on TSN runways 07/25 if altitudes were maintained between 300-600 feet mean sea level as prescribed by the South Vietnamese aeronautical authorities. Aerial photographs (color slides and black and whites) were taken for use in later pilot briefings. Figure 16-D-2 shows helicopter lanes for Air America and USMC helicopters and the rooftop HLS's in the Saigon area.

1 Prevailing winds during April were from the south; that condition would result in a helicopter assignment of "Keyhole" inbound and "Newport" outbound; if the wind had shifted from the north, "Newport" inbound and "Keyhole" outbound would have been used.

2 The ingress/egress route was chosen to lie over the Rung Sat Special Zone, because of no record of any SA-7 firings, using UTM Grid YS0748 as an initial checkpoint tracking 340 degrees inbound to the final checkpoints of "Keyhole" or "Newport." Altitudes inbound or outbound were established by the 9th MAB above "tracer burn out;" 5,000 feet was recommended. Figure 16-D-3 shows the helicopter ingress/egress routes recommended to 9th MAB over the Rung Sat Special Zone. Oblique aerial photographs were also taken at 5,000 feet to provide a pilot's view of the flight path inbound to Saigon.

3 Ground-to-air communications (UHF, FM, and HF) were checked several days prior to L-hour with the Airborne Battlefield Command and Control Center (ABCCC). Communication failures occurred with the FM and HF during the ABCCC's outbound turn on its "race track" pattern. The UHF (PRC-75 and PRC-41) worked during the entire period of the communication check and during the execution of Operation FREQUENT WIND. FM had been selected for primary radio communication between the ground HLZ controllers and the ABCCC with UHF as a backup. Selective interference by unknown FM stations caused a switch to the UHF system.

16-D-15

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16-D-16

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REPORT KEYHOLE

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16-D-17

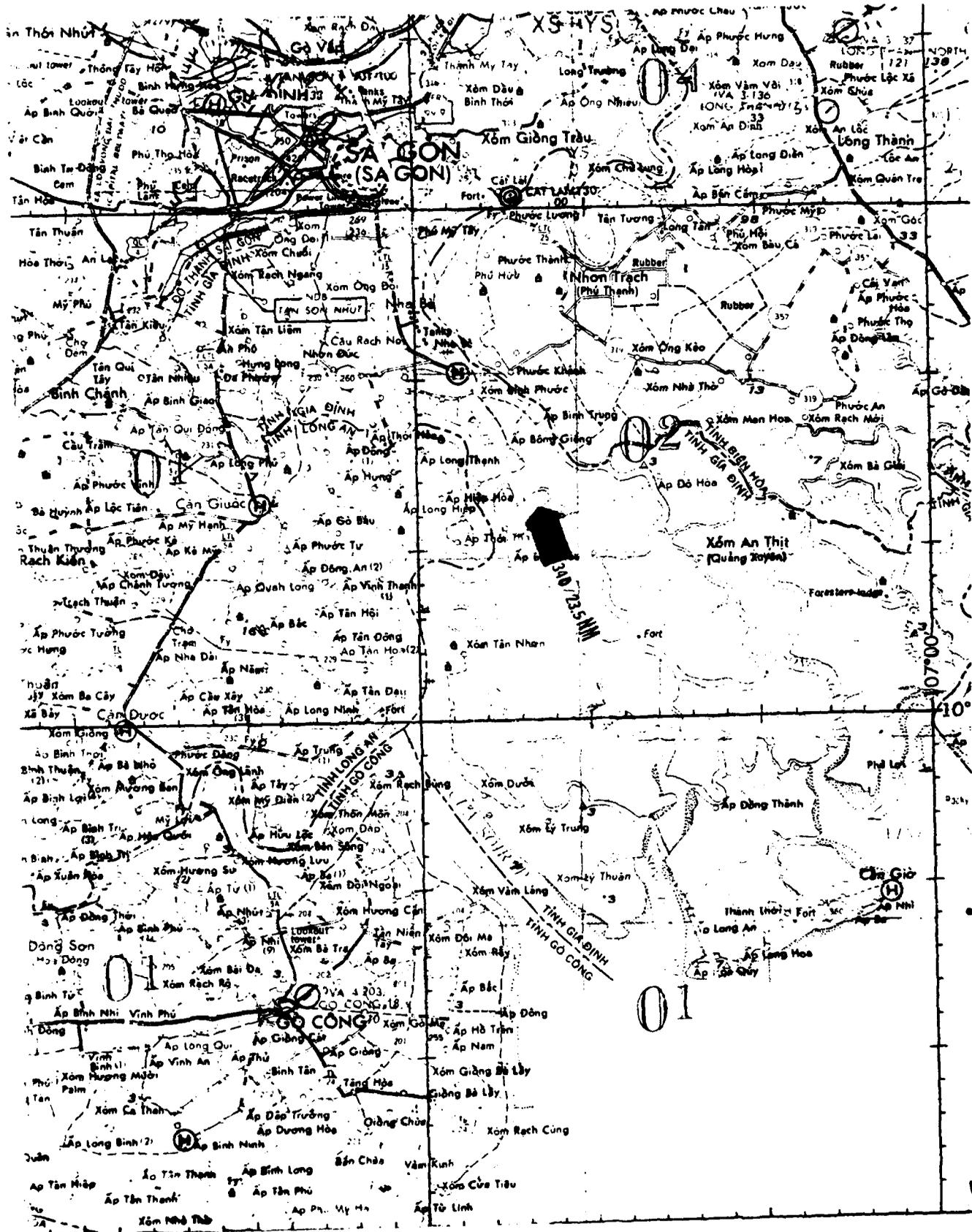
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16-D-19

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modifications to the rooftop HLS's. That project was completed on 13 April.

(10) An "H", and the HLS number had yet to be painted with Day-Glo paint on each rooftop. The "H" was critical in that, because of the small size of the HLS's, the helicopter had to have a precise spot on which to land. The "H" was to be the exact dimensions of the skids of the helicopter. Permission was sought on 12 April from the Embassy to paint an "H" and the HLS number on each rooftop. That request was denied, but permission was granted to paint a dotted outline of the "H" and the HLS number in order to facilitate the full painting by the HLS controller at the time of execution. After 22 or 23 April, when it became apparent that execution of the plan was imminent, each HLS controller was allowed to paint the full "H" and its number.

(11) The ladders required for 22 Gia Long Street (HLS 29) and 3 Phan Van Dat Street (HLS 22) were constructed by PA&E. Those ladders were custom-made to specifications which would allow safe traverse of women, children and the disabled to the HLS's. Four were constructed; each was 15 feet long, three feet wide, with 2x8 inch steps. Each side had a handrail and on the top and bottom of each were 3x3 foot platforms with swivel bolts to hold extra weights for added stability in the helicopter rotor wash. Each ladder weighed approximately 300 pounds.

(12) Kits were prepared for each HLS controller which included the equipment to enable him to: make final preparations of his site; establish communications with the aircraft, the DAO base station, and the lower floor assembly areas within his building; and, establish visual "Go" and "No-Go" signals with the Air America lift aircraft. Kits were emplaced at their respective HLS's with the exception of 22 Gia Long Street (HLS 29) and 3 Phan Van Dat Street (HLS 22) by 18 April. The latter two HLS's had kits assigned but not emplaced because no controllers were assigned to man those HLS's. Each kit contained: AN/PRC-77 radio set with three spare batteries, BA 4386; strobe light; 10 red and 10 white star parachute flares; flashlight with four spare batteries, BA 30's; four signal panels; international orange windsock with 10 foot galvanized pole; two cases smoke grenades, one red, one yellow; one gallon Day-Glo green paint with paint brush; USAF survival vest; emergency pen flare gun with 10 flares; lensatic compass; two TA-312/PT field telephones with four spare batteries, BA 30's; one-half mile (donut) WD-1/TT field wire; signal mirror; and a 110-foot nylon rope.

16-D-21

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### b. Communications.

(1) The communications to support the air extraction from Saigon were designed initially by CPT Petrie but that responsibility was later shifted to LTC R. W. Schuette, USA, DAO Communications-Electronics Division, who was assigned to the SPG as Communications Officer about 18 April. The primary means for radio communication with the SPG Command Post at DAO and for air/ground communication between the HLS controller and the lift helicopters was by FM radio. Each HLS had an AN/PRC-77 radio; the aircraft used their organic FM sets; the SPG Command Post had an AN/VRC-46 radio.

(2) There were three nets established to support the program: The Evacuation Command Net with which both the surface and air programs were controlled; an HLS Control Net which linked all elements involved in the air program; and, an Air/Ground Net which linked the helicopters with individual HLS's. On the latter net, each HLS had its own separate primary and alternate frequency on which it could operate without receiving or causing interference with simultaneous operations being conducted in other HLS's. Visual signals were included in the scheme for specific "Go" or "No-Go" instructions.

(3) Wire communication was established, using TA-312/PT field telephones, between the rooftop HLS of each building and the Building Resident Warden (Surface Evacuation Controller/Marshalling Officer) on the first floor and/or parking area of the building.

(4) Communications checks between the SPG Command Post and the HLS's were made nightly commencing 21 April. There were no significant communications problems on the day of execution, 29 April. Late on that day, though, following the completion of the air extraction program, one radio which had been left behind at an HLS was used by a disgruntled and desperate Vietnamese person who shouted obscenities and pleaded for evacuation over the radio. That, however, did not interfere with the wrap up of the downtown evacuation.

c. Personnel Support. The manpower used to control, secure and marshal persons for air extraction included:

(1) An HLS Controller responsible to the SPG for the overall operation of his respective HLS and specifically responsible for the actual reception of aircraft. The HLS controller was critical to a successful evacuation program. Manning those positions became

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a major problem in the days immediately preceding the emergency evacuation on 29 April. Because of the small US military population within the US Mission, it was necessary to recruit civilian volunteers from among the US government employees. Initially, as many as possible to fill the 13 positions were recruited from within DAO; however, only eight positions were filled in that manner.

The Office of the Special Assistant (OSA) was tasked to fill the position at 14 Tran Quy Cap Street (HLS 28), which was done. The Embassy was tasked to fill the requirements for the US Embassy Chancery Building (HLS 33), 3 Phan Van Dat Street (HLS 22), 196 Hong Thap Tu Street (HLS 24), and 22 Gia Long Street (HLS 29). Of those four, only the Chancery Building position was ever filled. On the day of execution, the individual designated by the Embassy Security Officer either was not available or not capable of accomplishing the job and had to be replaced by members of the US Delegation, Four Party Joint Military Team (USDEL FPJMT) who were in the Embassy compound. The other three HLS's were never covered. The DAO could not fill those three positions because of severe manpower limitations caused by the accelerated drawdown of US employees in Vietnam. As a result, 3 Phan Van Dat Street (HLS 22) was never put into service as an HLS, although the other two were used as emergency helicopter pickup points. One other HLS suffered from the shortage of controllers, 71 Le Van Duyet Street (HLS 26). Gunnery Sergeant Pace, USMC, USDEL FPJMT, was initially assigned to this HLS after having volunteered for the job and being cleared by his seniors; however, about 24 April, he was told by his supervisor that he would have to give up those duties and assist in processing USDEL FPJMT's LN employees for evacuation to the United States. There was no replacement. The problem was solved by having the HLS controller for 83 Le Van Duyet Street (HLS 25), which was adjacent to and overlooked HLS 26, control both HLS's. Various US Mission billeting officers had responsibility for assigning one set of quarters at each of the sites to accommodate the controller and his equipment. That task was supervised and accomplished without difficulties by Mr. Garrett's office at the Embassy.

(2) Security Teams. The buildings proper, and their respective HLS's, were vulnerable to the very real possibility of angry or desperate mobs of South Vietnamese attempting to gain access to the rooftops or to loot the buildings; hence, it was vital to the success of the operation to employ security elements to maintain order outside the buildings, within the building compounds, on the first floor of the buildings and in the stairwells leading to the rooftop HLS's. In addition, each HLS had to have the capability to counter harassment small arms fire from nearby buildings. A four-man volunteer force, ideally residents of the building who had

16-D-23

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previous military or police experience, supervised by a permanently assigned Mission Warden officer, could provide the necessary security. Mr. Garrett, working with the Mission Warden, assumed responsibility to organize, train, equip and supervise those forces, with the security forces themselves supporting both the air and surface evacuation plans. That responsibility was never satisfactorily discharged. However, due to the initiative taken by the HLS controllers and the individually assigned Mission Warden officers, almost all of the HLS's in operation had some sort of reliable and, in most cases, effective security program on the day of execution.

(3) A Marshalling Officer was required to: organize the evacuees into aircraft loads; turn them over to the HLS controller for loading; and, maintain order in the marshalling areas of the buildings directly below the rooftop HLS. As with the other key positions, the phasedown of Americans had its impact. In almost all cases, on evacuation day, the HLS controller or a volunteer from among the evacuees performed as the marshalling officer.

d. On 27 April, officers of the SPG met with Mr. Jacobson, the Ambassador's Executive Agent for Emergency and Evacuation (E&E) Activities. The objective of that meeting was to bring Mr. Jacobson up to date on the surface and air extraction plans, and to apprise him of the major problem areas that had arisen since the initial concept had been developed. Manning requirements and aircraft use by other agencies were the major topics discussed which related to the air extraction. With regard to personnel, the SPG suggested that the official American community be consolidated in the buildings designated as assembly areas or HLS's in order to increase the number of men available to perform security operations in support of the program. Mr. Jacobson told us he would have Mr. Garrett take action on that. Mr. Garrett was tasked with that project, but did not act on it.

### e. Execution of the Air Extraction Plan.

(1) On 29 April, the execution of the two downtown plans was ordered by the Ambassador. Air America began flight operations at about 0900H hours in support of the rooftop extraction program. Because of the enemy rocket fire impacting in and around the Air America facility at TSN, its command element moved into the DAO compound. By then, about 18-20 helicopters were in service. The original number of helicopters had been reduced by four, early in the morning when armed VNAF pilots hijacked them in order to escape. Later, several helicopters suffered battle damage and were unable to fly.

(2) Because of the insecure situation on the Air America ramp, the aircraft were unable to refuel there. Later in the day when

16-D-24

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the marines of Task Force 76 arrived, the decision was made not to attempt to secure the Air America ramp thus eliminating all possibility of the aircraft refueling there. In addition, no provisions had been made to refuel inside the DAO compound. An offer had been made by the SPG two weeks before to establish an emergency refueling point within the DAO compound. That offer was refused by Air America. The refueling problem was finally resolved by the pilots flying their aircraft out to the US Navy vessels to refuel. At about 1700H hours, Air America closed down its command post at DAO and went airborne to control its efforts from a command and control aircraft, terminating operations at about 1930H hours, 29 April.

(3) All of the designated HLS's were used throughout the day. Even those without controllers were used if evacuees were spotted there. Air America's pilots had been instructed by the SPG to make routine passes over all the HLS's for that purpose and did so continuously throughout the day. A rooftop pickup of five US citizens was also made by Air America from the Grey House on Cach Mang Street, a DAO billet.

(4) The air extraction from downtown Saigon terminated at approximately 1830H hours on 29 April with over 1,000 evacuees having been flown either to the Embassy compound, the DAO compound, or to Navy ships at sea. Although it was not in the plan to fly people to the Chancery Building, that became necessary in order to conserve fuel and to cut down on the number of refueling sorties to the ships.

(5) Even with the problems encountered and the fact that the plan was executed simultaneously with the surface evacuation plan (and not after, as originally conceived), it was successfully and safely executed.

### 5. (FOUO) SURFACE EXTRACTION FROM METROPOLITAN SAIGON

#### a. Initial Planning and Coordination.

(1) On 3 April, the SPG assumed responsibility for coordinating air and ground movement of evacuees from metropolitan Saigon to the DAO complex from which, in turn, offshore military assets would complete final evacuation out of the country. CPT A. A. Wood, USMC, was tasked with the responsibility for the surface extraction program within the coordinated plan. As a first step he organized a task force of five representatives from the major Mission components to identify the numbers and locations of potential evacuees. That task force, working around-the-clock, identified over 7,000 US citizens, their dependents, and TCN's for whom the US had assumed

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emergency evacuation responsibility. The varied and ingenious means by which this task was accomplished in just under four days included examining liquor listings, ration card records, vehicle registrations, required dependency documents, birth and marriage certificates, Combined Recreation Association (US Embassy) memberships, Cercle Sportife memberships (private downtown sports club with a large TCN membership), billet occupant listings from the Mission's component organizations and the taxi dispatching records for the previous three months in the metropolitan area.

(2) Following completion of the US citizen and TCN density plot of the metropolitan area, and in view of the recent vivid Da Nang and Nha Trang experiences, a review of existing Mission Warden office plans for the emergency evacuation of the city was undertaken. At the conclusion of that reappraisal and a series of interviews conducted with principals involved in the two previous evacuations (including Mr. A. Francis, Consul General, Da Nang), it was apparent that existing plans were inadequate to handle an evacuee population of over 7,000 persons. As important as the large number of evacuees was the wide dispersion of that population revealed by the plot and the notification and collection problems posed by such dispersion. The density plot, periodically updated, remained the basis for all subsequent surface and air planning and, until late April, the only one of its type within the US Mission.

(3) Since the selection of HLS's entailed more specific and restrictive criteria than did the selection of surface assembly points, initial planning called for using the HLS's as assembly points in both air and surface programs, supplemented in the wider surface plan by additional collection points sufficient to cover all the major metropolitan population concentrations. The Mission Warden's office unilaterally cancelled the existing list of 23 assembly points, which were widely known throughout the Mission, and substituted a new list of only 13 corresponding to the HLS-suitable billets identified by the SPG. Besides the confusion which ensued among a Mission population sensing imminent evacuation, the new list left large sections of the city with significant US and TCN populations entirely without assembly points. That situation applied especially in the northeast and southwest portions of the city in which no HLS suitable buildings were available. To correct the oversight, surface extraction planning incorporated all the previously designated assembly points as well as the newly designated HLS suitable billets as surface assembly points. Recognizing that this action would entail the publishing and distribution of the assembly points not included in the incomplete Mission Warden listing, coordination with that organization was effected and the requirement for full metropolitan coverage established. Further difficulties in the area of coordination were alleviated by the

16-D-26

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assignment of a full-time Mission Warden representative to the SPC.

(4) Concurrent with the development of a full coverage surface plan, incorporating both HLS equipped and purely surface billets as assembly points, an analysis was completed of total transportation assets within the several major Mission organizations. The Defense Attache Office, United States Agency for International Development, and the State Department as well as private contractor motor pools contained the bulk of such assets: 32 buses capable of transporting 40 passengers each, 14 buses with a capacity of 25, and approximately 50 smaller vehicles with a capacity of nine each. Those assets contrast with a lift requirement estimated at 6-7,000 at that time, 13 April.

(5) Although surface transportation assets were numerically impressive, during daylight they were heavily engaged in routine commitments throughout the Mission, a situation which continued through 28 April. Additionally, although some of the large carries had radios, none of the available buses were similarly equipped. To further complicate control, those vehicles which were equipped with radios were on four different nets controlled from three separate base stations within Saigon. The requirement to simplify command and control was obvious.

(6) Both from the standpoint of control as well as that of potential congestion at the DAO and US Embassy, taxis and private vehicles had to be severely restricted and the plan then taking shape had to include detailed provisions to preclude congestion at both locations. That decision was based on the identification of almost 2,500 official and private sedans and taxis registered and/or operated by persons within the Mission. Among such provisions at DAO were Privately-Owned-Vehicle (POV) dismount points well outboard of bus unloading areas, POV disposal areas, vehicle removal forklifts repositioned on standby and the positioning of portable steel and concertina barriers in adjacent streets coordinated with the overall vehicle and foot traffic control scheme. The Embassy was of particular concern as a result of its location in a relatively congested downtown area, as well as its potential as a gathering point during any emergency.

(7) On 14 April, the coordinated air and surface extraction plan was complete, envisioning surface movement from 28 billet assembly points on 10 routes to be traversed by 42 prepositioned buses. The bulk of the metropolitan extraction was to be executed during curfew by surface means, augmented at first light by an air extraction mop-up effort from the 13 rooftop HLS's. Command and control of the vehicular phase would be exercised centrally from

16-D-27

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the DAO compound through the use of two FM nets: one included all the buses, the other incorporated the vehicles of the volunteer convoy escorts who would lead the multiple bus convoys and insure staying on designated routes. In addition to the central dispatcher at DAO, Mr. James Edwards, who provided overall coordination, CPT Wood would act as mobile coordinator within the city during the surface evacuation. His vehicle was equipped with radios on both the bus and convoy escort nets as well as the landing zone control net to insure full coordination capabilities, built-in redundancy and reliability in the event communications with DAO were interrupted, and provide for the reporting of evacuee build-ups and the immediate modification of routes and diversion of convoys to alleviate those build-ups. In support of central control at DAO, two long-range antennae for the convoy escort and bus nets were installed atop the 100 foot water tower adjacent to the DAO motor pool. An additional dedicated net was added on 20 April which included stations at the residences of all convoy escorts. This latter net was designed to provide an advance alert to the escorts so they could reach the basepoint of their respective bus routes well in advance of execution. The utility of this net was amply demonstrated on 29 April.

### b. Preparation and Rehearsal .

(1) Although the extraction plan did not assume its final detailed form until 14 April, several of its component programs were already being executed. Simultaneous planning and execution resulted from the strong sense of urgency in the SPG as the military situation continued to deteriorate. Simultaneity was adopted early in order to execute a variety of complex programs in a compressed time frame with severely restricted manpower.

(2) On 10 April, the DAO motor pool, under Mr. Edwards' direction, augmented by volunteer assistance from PA&E, began installing vehicular FM radios in all buses. By 17 April, working around-the-clock shifts, 34 buses and 10 convoy escort vehicles had been equipped and tested. That program was executed under the constant onus of a full daily commitment of vehicles to routine Mission runs; it was the result of direct, constant coordination among the USAID, State, and DAO motor pool directors. As a function of the same program, wire riot screening, spray painted to agree with the exterior color, was installed over the windows of those vehicles not already so equipped. The entire program, as was the case with most such preparations, had to be executed quasi-covertly in order to avoid inciting additional fears and rumors within the city. In answer to queries on the slight daily reduction in service, various excuses involving manpower problems and mechanical failures were offered.

16-D-28

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(3) Between 13 and 17 April, and concurrent with the last phases of vehicle modification, surface routes were reconnoitered. Small parties consisting of CPT Wood, Mr. W. Ward, Mr. J. Edwards, and Mr. H. O'Grady, motor pool directors/dispatchers, conducted route reconnaissance during daylight and at night after curfew; general traffic conditions, choke points, police and ARVN posts, and those areas cordoned during curfew for GVN security were identified and plotted in detail. Ten routes, using the now firm 28 assembly points, were selected. Route reconnaissance continued uninterrupted until final evacuation to insure the most current information on roadblocks, unit dispositions, and the attitude of the military and paramilitary organizations within the city was available to the convoy escorts and drivers. Complete familiarity by all hands was absolutely vital to successful extraction.

(4) Two schemes of surface routes were drawn up. As depicted in Figure 16-D-4, the primary option employed northward evacuation to DAO on three principal axes. The second option, using easterly evacuation to the Newport docks, was included should that contingency be executed. Both options employed identical routes within the city so that the task of the drivers and convoy escorts was simplified.

(5) At one point, the Mission Warden indicated that few if any Mission Warden vehicles would be available to escort the convoys during the evacuation. Recognizing the absolute requirement for some sort of official appearing escort vehicle to ease passage through ARVN and police checkpoints (manned by nervous and occasionally hostile persons as demonstrated in the reconnaissance phase), the convoy escort vehicles were modified by adding flashing blue domed roof lights and white tops to make them look like genuine Mission Warden vehicles. Only one of 10 convoys was dispersed during the extraction on 20 April, a direct result of that ruse.

(6) On 16 April, and each evening thereafter until final evacuation, each convoy's vehicles were staged at 1930 at the base-points of the 10 designated routes (by then code named for 10 western states). Overtime wages were paid to Vietnamese drivers who slept on cots with their buses. At each staging point were on board equipment kits for each bus containing gas masks, flak jackets, red and yellow smoke grenades, flashlights, a large first aid kit and a pencil-flare kit; bus keys were kept by the volunteer resident wardens. Additionally, each resident warden was provided a detailed blueprint 1:12,500 map of the city with the surface routes and pickup points, briefed in detail on his duties, and introduced to his particular convoy escort with whom he subsequently traversed the route until he was intimately familiar with it. Fifty-four

16-D-29

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16-D-30

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NEWPORT

DAO

AT KHANH SA

KHANH HAI

TRANG MY TAY

QUANG BINH SA

QUANG BINH SA

PHU THUAN

QUANG BINH SA

QUANG BINH SA

QUANG BINH SA

QUANG BINH SA

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16-D-31

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such maps were issued to the resident wardens and other key persons throughout the Mission to insure familiarity with the surface evacuation plan.

(7) Although LN drivers were positioned with their buses each night, the Da Nang and Nha Trang experiences, in which some LN employees fled, cast real doubt on their reliability in the event of an emergency US evacuation. Accordingly, and again covertly, a hasty program for the voluntary recruitment and training of US citizen drivers was undertaken to provide reliable backup. These men were recruited from billets near each route's basepoint where the buses were staged. The DAO motor pool director drew up a one-hour driver familiarization course, executed in a rarely frequented part of the DAO annex, to teach the basics of bus driving without arousing undue interest. Those volunteers, as well as those persons spontaneously recruited on 29 April, more than proved their mettle and the wisdom of the backup citizen driver program.

(8) Throughout the planning and execution of the surface extraction program, the most serious problem involved retention of trained and experienced persons. Each convoy escort required at least five days to become effective, during which he traversed his route in daylight and after curfew. Not the least important aspect of that training was psychological conditioning which allowed those civilian volunteers to withstand routinely police checkpoint harassment, the taunts and searches of the teenage Popular Self-Defense Forces (deployed throughout the city after 20 April) and travel a pre-designated route by night in a city which was nervous and undergoing occasional enemy artillery harassment. The continuous attrition of those men as well as the equally critical trained resident wardens and citizen drivers as a result of being ordered out of the country was the single most important factor effecting the route reduction from 10 to four, and the drawdown in available buses from 42 to 30, which was forced on 27 April. The volunteer resident wardens, convoy escorts, and citizen drivers who participated in final evacuation on the 29th were largely senior personnel from USAID, State and DAO who could have departed earlier had they so chosen. That latter group included such men as the Area Auditor for East Asia, two senior consular officials, and the Deputy Security Officer from DAO to name a few.

### c. Execution.

(1) As a result of continuing enemy rocket fire, all key persons in the surface extraction program were alerted at 1900H on 28 April. The alert was based on the assumption that the concept (contained

16-D-32

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in the coordinated surface/air extraction plan) involving a nighttime (curfew) execution of the surface movement followed by first light initiation of the air mop-up operation would be ordered. That early alert resulted in the availability of 23 buses with citizen drivers and all convoy escorts at their stations when the command for execution was received. Without such an alert, the buses would have been recalled to routine runs at 0630H the next morning requiring a significant delay for their recall and regroupment.

(2) Nine convoys ferrying approximately 3,500 persons reached the DAO prior to the termination of surface evacuation at 1745H, 29 April. One convoy was broken up by dissident ARVN elements and its vehicles abandoned. The evacuees thus stranded were subsequently picked up by another convoy diverted from its normal route to northern Cach Mang Street where the incident had occurred.

(3) By 1030H, although experiencing repeated difficulties securing passage through the military checkpoints into TSN, all convoys were operating on assigned routes. Loads in the 40-passenger buses were increased to 60-70 with no large luggage permitted aboard. The large DAO billet at 192 Cong Ly Street and the downtown Brinks BOQ were designated multiple-convoy forming points from which the military escort would shepherd the convoys to DAO. That decision was precipitated by the rapidly increasing ARVN and National Police harassment of the buses, actions which, by termination of the surface program, had resulted in the mechanical disabling of two buses by small arms fire, scattered damage to three more, wounding of one driver in the left arm, and a second citizen driver undergoing a heart attack as a result of his efforts.

(4) Despite the detailed discussions held between the SPG and the Embassy Security Officer on potential congestion and crowd control difficulties near the Embassy, no coordinated scheme to prevent such congestion and to exercise crowd control was in evidence. The last convoy pickup at the Embassy was executed at 1530, at which time the situation in that area had so deteriorated that the safety of the convoys was directly threatened. Further convoys to the Embassy were cancelled and ordered to alternate destinations. At 1500H, and again an hour later, mobs of Vietnamese rushed the convoys at 14 Tran Quy Cap Street and 6 Chien Si Circle, smashing the doors and forcing their way on board. It was necessary for the mobile coordinators, Mr. P. Baker, the able convoy escort, and two accompanying marine security guards to use overhead small arms fire

16-D-33

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as well as to employ the buses themselves as slow moving bulldozers in order to regain control and eventually extract the convoys.

(5) The last convoy entered DMZ at 1740H carrying almost 600 persons. That large convoy, after five attempts and undergoing continual harassment and sporadic small arms fire from ARVN airborne units, was finally able to pass the checkpoint as a result of hard negotiations backed by the threat to employ attack aircraft suppressive fire against the checkpoints. Such support had already been alerted by the Commanding General, 9th MAB and a scheme for marking the convoy's position with smoke and subsequently running the checkpoint under suppressive fire from the aircraft had been coordinated by radio with CPT Wood outside the gate. Those latter activities were indicative of the conditions within the city at that hour.

(6) The surface extraction program was executed by 39 volunteer civilian resident wardens, convoy escorts, and US citizen drivers under conditions of civil disorder, sporadic small arms fire, and scattered enemy artillery harassment. They ferried approximately 3,500 persons to safety at DAC. That small group of dedicated men accomplished its task in nine hours of exhaustive effort with a total US Marine security contingent of three.

10-70-14

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## Section E

### Control, Coordination, Communications and Execution

#### of Sealift and Airlift Operations

#### 1. (FOUO) THE EVACUATION CONTROL CENTER (ECC).

##### a. General:

(1) During the final five weeks of United States (US) presence in Vietnam it became apparent that an evacuation of US citizens and their legitimate dependents, to say nothing of Third Country Nationals (TCN's) and Vietnamese citizens, would present massive practical coordination problems. To solve those problems and to perform the myriad detailed tasks associated with an evacuation, the Defense Attache (DATT) established an Evacuation Control Center (ECC). In retrospect, the ECC was made operational barely in time; however, then, no one could predict that South Vietnam's (SVN's) final collapse would occur so precipitously.

(2) The movement of refugees by sea from Military Regions (MR's) 1 and 2 generated severe problems related to overcrowding, subsistence and security, afloat and ashore. The ECC's initial task was to solve those refugee related problems. The ECC coordinated the efforts of all ships, US and foreign, to solve transportation, food/water and security problems. After the fall of Da Nang, the ECC shifted emphasis from in-country refugee movement to out-of-country evacuation control. Figure 16-E-1 contains reconstructed statistics on out-of-country movement between 1 and 30 April.

##### b. The Mission of the ECC was to:

(1) Match requirements and assets as they related to movement of persons out of Vietnam under emergency conditions;

(2) Coordinate the evacuation related activities of all US Mission agencies;

(3) Provide a communications link among all US agencies and commands associated with out-of-country movement; and,

(4) Provide timely information, as required, to all command and control echelons to assist in decision making.

16-E-1

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c. The major functions performed by the ECC included:

- (1) Requesting sea and airlift assets to meet anticipated movement requirements;
- (2) Monitoring and reporting on the status of past, current and anticipated requirements and availability of assets;
- (3) Coordinating and monitoring sea and airlift out-of-country movement schedules;
- (4) Monitoring the location and availability of potentially useful sea and airlift assets;
- (5) Monitoring local Mission controlled security activities;
- (6) Reporting, as required, to all echelons involved in evacuation planning and execution;
- (7) Coordinating in-country air (Air America, Inc.) movement relating to out-of-country evacuation;
- (8) Coordinating surface and helicopter movement of evacuees from Saigon to the Defense Attache Office (DAO) processing areas;
- (9) Providing communications for the Ambassador and DATT to higher and adjacent authorities;
- (10) Providing communications for the coordination of all US Mission movement related activities;
- (11) Assisting, as requested, US military forces involved in evacuation planning and execution;
- (12) Monitoring the status and locations of persons to be evacuated; and,
- (13) Monitoring the status of airfields, ports, landing zones and other actual or potential movement related areas and facilities.

d. The ECC was manned on a 24-hour basis, initially by three eight-hour shifts of 10 team members plus two communicators, later by two overlapping 14-hour shifts of four team members plus two communicators. In essence, each team coordinated the activities of various agencies in such broad areas as the C-5A aircraft accident on 4 April, refugee processing, orphan lifts, sealift and fixed wing airlift and the final helicopter lift by Naval Task Force 76

16-E-2

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## AIRLIFT STATISTICS 1-30 APRIL

Day	Type of Aircraft	Daily Evacuees			Cumulative Evacuees		
		US	Others	Total	US	Others	Total
1	C-141	-----Data Not Available-----					
2	C-141	-----Data Not Available-----					
3	C-141	-----Data Not Available-----					
4	C-141	-----Data Not Available-----					
5	C-141	-----Data Not Available-----					
6	C-141	258	-	258	258	-	258
7	C-141	246	-	504	504	-	504
8	C-141	81	-	585	585	-	585
9	C-141	141	372	513	726	372	1,098
10	C-141	138	666	804	864	1,038	1,902
11	C-141	194	647	841	1,058	1,685	2,743
12	C-141	84	100	184	1,142	1,785	2,927
13	C-141	143	52	195	1,285	1,837	3,122
14	C-141	94	50	144	1,379	1,887	3,266
15	C-141	86	348	434	1,465	2,235	3,700
16	C-141	86	61	147	1,551	2,296	3,847
17	C-141	74	106	180	1,625	2,402	4,027
18	C-141	612	374	986	2,237	2,776	5,013
19	C-141	300	UNK	300	2,537	2,776	5,313
20	C-141	147	43	190	2,684	2,819	5,503
21	C-141/C-130	249	334	583	2,933	3,153	6,086
22	C-141/C-130	550	2,781	3,331	3,483	5,934	9,417
23	C-141/C-130	488	3,824	4,312	3,971	9,758	13,729
24	C-141/C-130	190	5,574	5,764	4,161	15,332	19,493
25	C-141/C-130	501	4,354	4,855	4,662	19,686	24,348
26	C-141/C-130	381	6,376	6,757	5,043	26,062	31,105
27	C-141/C-130	219	7,359	7,578	5,262	33,421	38,683
28	C-130	128	6,109	6,237	5,390	39,530	44,920
29	C-130/Helo)	1,373*	5,595	6,968	6,763	45,125	51,888
30	Helo)						

\* Includes 855 Marines of the 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade.

Figure 16-E-1

16-E-3

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and 7th Air Force (7th AF). Each team coordinated the execution of such diverse activities as high-priority inbound and outbound flights, special air and sealift operations, Air America, Inc. operations in support of evacuation planning and execution, Commander Task Force (CTF-76) evacuation planning and operations of the US Embassy as they pertained to the movement of citizens, TCN's and refugees. In addition, it insured the uninterrupted flow of information throughout a system involving echelons from the national command authority to motor transport dispatchers and baggage inspectors. Coordination is a meager word to describe the complex problem of interfacing such varied agencies as the several US military command echelons, the US Mission to Vietnam, myriad Vietnamese Armed Forces commands, airfield tower and flight line centers, seaport control centers, civilian airlines, local police and the several internal US Mission agencies responsible for planning and executing all phases of personnel and materiel movement into and out of South Vietnam (SVN).

### 2. (FOUO) COMMUNICATIONS.

a. The DAO organic communications included terminals which accessed the worldwide Defense Communications System (DCS). Those terminals consisted of the DAO Telecommunications Center (TCC), the DAO Joint Overseas Switch (JOSS) and the DAO Secure Voice Cordboard (SECORD). The DAO Emergency Action Console (EAC) provided dedicated voice access into the Commander in Chief, Pacific (CINCPAC) Command and Control Network and DCS AUTOVON linking US Mission activities throughout SVN with major headquarters in the Pacific theater and in the Continental United States (CONUS).

b. Local DAO support communications for command, control, administration and logistics were typical of Department of Defense (DOD) facilities and included the Gia Dinh Dial Telephone Exchange (DTE), the Saigon (Tiger) DTE and the DATT's nontactical Command Control Radio Net (LOBSTER) as well as the DAO Military Affiliate Radio Station (MARS).

c. These facilities provided essential secure and nonsecure communications for all elements of the US Mission. Both Government of Vietnam (GVN) and US transmission facilities were used for circuits in and out of the country.

d. The Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) Single Integrated Military (Telecommunications) System (SIMS), an integrated tropospheric scatter/microwave radio transmission system, linked all areas of SVN and interfaced with US undersea cables to the Philippines and Thailand and with the US tropospheric scatter site at Warin, Thailand.

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e. Two undersea cable links, the 484N Wetwash system (between Nha Trang and the Philippines) and the 439L system (between Vung Tau and Sattahip, Thailand) provided the primary US transmission paths out of the country. The Long Binh, South Vietnam to Phnom Penh, Cambodia tropospheric scatter radio link provided the primary communications path for the US Mission in Cambodia until 12 April 1975.

f. One of the major problems resolved was satisfying the diverse contingency communications requirements. That was accomplished primarily through evaluation and redistribution of organic assets. A key example involved nontactical radios provided either individually or configured into functional networks in support of the "ricelift," the C-5A crash investigation and the ECC.

g. After 14 March, as the South Vietnamese military situation deteriorated, the refugee and US Mission evacuations grew in magnitude and intensity. Existing communications capabilities had to be augmented, new requirements satisfied and extraordinary demands were placed on communications resources. With the start of the sea evacuation of Vietnamese refugees from the northern provinces, the Military Sealift Command (MSC) High Frequency Single Side Band (HF SSB) Radio net had problems communicating with some vessels. The DAO MARS station frequently assisted in establishing contact and relaying messages for MSC elements through the DAO ECC. In addition, the MSC operations center was provided EAC circuits so that they could coordinate evacuation efforts with United States Support Activities Group (USSAG) and CINCPAC.

h. In early January, the DATT had tasked the Communications-Electronics (C-E) Division to plan and provide for additional communications capabilities to support contingency sea and air evacuation. Air-to-ground and point-to-point radio requirements for communicating between the ECC, aircraft, naval vessels and CINCPAC command elements were determined. One AN/MRC-108 Communications Control Terminal was borrowed from the Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) and another brought in from contingency assets belonging to the 1961st Communications Group at Clark Air Base (AB). Those terminals provided Very High Frequency (VHF), Ultrahigh Frequency (UHF), VHF Frequency Modulation (FM) and HF SSB radio communications with the FREQUENT WIND task force and command elements. DAO organic record and voice communications satisfied remaining requirements. In addition to the secure and nonsecure DAO communications, those AN/MRC-108 terminals became vitally important to the CINCPAC representative who directed the early sea evacuation and, later, to the ECC staff in communicating with CINCPAC command elements. As the sea evacuation diminished and efforts turned to air evacuation, the AN/MRC-108's became the primary means of coordination and control.

16-E-5

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They operated on the various assembly, tactical and command control radio nets. Four US Air Force (USAF) ground radio operators were brought in from the 1961st Communications Group on 2 April to augment the ECC staff. They remained until 29 April, departing in the final stages of the helicopter evacuation. All AN/MRC-108's were destroyed before final withdrawal of the US Marine Corps (USMC) Ground Security Force (GSF).

i. DAO contingency planning had recognized the probability that telecommunications links out of the country would be lost due to military action. After 14 March, key nodal sites of the RVNAF SIMS were indeed successively lost reducing system redundancy and severing the link to Warin, Thailand. Then, in rapid order, sites at Ban Me Thuot, Da Nang, Qui Nhon, Nha Trang and Pr'Line were lost. With the loss of the Nha Trang undersea Cablehead (CHD), the link to the Philippines was lost. The undersea CHD at Vung Tau, the last link to Thailand, was increasingly vulnerable and an alternate means to communicate worldwide was sought. Coordination with the CINCPAC J6 established the requirement for an AN/TSC-54 Satellite Communications Terminal. It was airlifted into Tan Son Nhut (TSN) airfield from Helemano Satellite Station, Hawaii and became operational on 30 March. All 12 channels were used for high-priority command control, record and voice circuits. When the Vung Tau CHD failed at 1145H, 29 April, the TSC-54 became the last reliable communications link with the outside world. It continued to operate effectively until 2000H on 29 April when it lost its primary power source due to enemy action. It was destroyed by a USMC Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team at 2340H on 29 April.

j. The DATT's nontactical LOBSTER net was also vitally important in refugee processing and execution of Operation FREQUENT WIND. The net of fixed, mobile and portable radios (Motorola) controlled from the ECC made it possible to assemble, move and coordinate refugee actions in the Saigon area. In addition, the DATT could contact and maintain control of his key staff and participating elements during the evacuation. That net was still operating when the last of the DAO staff withdrew prior to the ECC being destroyed.

k. Many other communication requirements arose and were provided throughout the last 30 days of the DAO's existence. As refugee processing facilities, helicopter landing zones, command control centers and task forces were established, they had to be integrated. A brief summary of these elements and their related communications follows:

(1) The Evacuation Processing Center (EPC) in the DAO annex area required multiple telephone circuits and LOBSTER net radios

16-E-6

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for its operation in the bowling alley, gymnasium, swimming pool area, special housing called "Dodge City" and various holding areas.

(2) The US Embassy alternate ECC (a smaller version of the DAO ECC) required additional EAC and telephone circuits. The Mission Warden's Office had its own nontactical radio nets and a HF SSB radio station for communicating in the USSAG BLUE CHIP net.

1. Prior to the Vietnamese evacuations, USSAG/7th AF had a Supervisor of Airlift (SOA) at TSN airfield to support the rice and Petroleum, Oils and Lubricants (POL) airlift into Phnom Penh, Cambodia. That activity, located at the Flying Tiger Airlines Operations Office (Tiger Ops), was provided communications capabilities to support the rice lift, refugee and US Mission evacuations by fixed wing aircraft. It continued to operate until 29 April when TSN was closed by hostile rocket and artillery fire.

(1) This SOA activity had an HF SSB radio for operating in the USSAG BLUE CHIP net, EAC, hot line and administrative telephone circuits, nontactical radios in the LOBSTER net and a nontactical radio net for coordinating aircraft loading.

(2) Automatic ringdown telephone circuits to DAO ECC, the TSN control tower and the Area Control (Saigon) Center were installed for coordinating air movements with Vietnamese civil and military air traffic control elements.

m. The DAO "militia" and, later, the USMC GSF required a number of communications capabilities, primarily AN/PRC-25 field radios, for their internal operations. Those operated until 1500H on 29 April when the GSF began operating solely with its organic resources. The marines used both nontactical and tactical nets, using VHF FM fixed and portable equipment.

n. The DAO EAC switchboard, collocated with the SECORD and the LOBSTER Net Control Station (NCS) and adjacent to the ECC, was a key asset. Throughout the evacuation it interfaced local activities and communications with the outside world. Before Operation FREQUENT WIND was implemented on 29 April, the EAC established US communications between the Secretary of State, the Ambassador, CINCPAC and the DATT.

o. In support of FREQUENT WIND, secure voice and nonsecure voice conference circuits were immediately established. They tied together the National Military Command Center (NMCC), CINCPAC, USSAG, DAO ECC and other DOD agencies. These vital circuits operated until the Satellite Communications Terminal (TSC-54) ceased operating at 1915H on 29 April.

16-E-7

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### 3. (FOUO) SEALIFT OPERATIONS.

a. The Sea Desk in the ECC was responsible for maintaining information regarding the location, present status and disposition of all sealift assets including those assigned to the MSC, MSC-contract ships, third country vessels, Vietnamese Navy (VNN) units and ships of the US Seventh Fleet. Additionally, the desk was responsible for providing liaison between the ECC, VNN and the MSC.

b. A summary of the sealift assets, which were available for the entire period during which the ECC was functioning, is as follows:

(1) An average of eight MSC and MSC-contract deep draft ships were available during the initial relocation of Vietnamese refugees from the northern provinces; and, later, for evacuation of Vietnamese citizens, TCN's and some Americans prior to the fall of Saigon on 30 April 1975. The following ships were involved in the operations: Steamship (SS) Pioneer Contender, SS Pioneer Commander, SS Trans Colorado, US Naval Ship (USNS) Greenville Victory, SS American Challenger, SS Green Wave, USNS SGT Truman Kimbro, USNS SGT Andrew Miller, SS American Racer, USNS Rincon and SS Pioneer Contractor. Other MSC assets included tugs and various flat-deck barges, which were used to transport people and a Korean flag ship, Landing Ship Tank (LST) 117, which was on time charter. The tug assets included Saigon 240, Paiute, Pawnee, Harumi, Asiatic Stamina, Chitose Maru and Shibur Maru. Additionally, two US Agency for International Development (USAID) tugs, Geronimo and Buffalo, were available.

(2) The Republic of Korea Navy (ROKN) provided three amphibious ships, LST's 808, 810 and 815, which were used initially to transport medical and other relief supplies from Korea to the RVN and then stood by for use as needed.

(3) The Republic of China (ROC) made available four ships, LST's 205, 218, 229 and 230, which were used principally for the transport of refugee supplies between the military port facility at Newport and Phu Quoc Island.

(4) The United Kingdom initially committed two frigates to the operation, one being recalled early. Her Majesty's Ship (HMS) Achilles, the second ship, remained approximately 50 miles offshore almost the entire period but was eventually relieved by HMS Mermaid.

(5) West Germany had four container ships standing by which were never used; they were relatively small and quite slow.

(6) The Philippine Government had one ship, LST 97, which was used initially for several refugee lifts; later, the ship remained

16-E-8

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in Saigon until the last week when it was used to extract Philippine Nationals and Vietnamese dependents cleared by the Philippine Embassy, Saigon.

(7) The VNN committed every asset available, including LST 501 which departed Saigon with one engine inoperative, for movement of troops and refugees and for backhauling material and ammunition from the northern provinces. All of the small craft in the area were stationed along the coast to pick up those persons, both military and civilian, who were able to make their way to the beaches.

(8) The US Navy (USN) stationed, in holding area "A" southeast of Vung Tau, three Amphibious Ready Groups plus elements of the Attack Carrier Strike Force, Seventh Fleet and various support ships. This naval force consisted of 51 ships including the United States' Ship (USS) Oklahoma City, Guided Missile Cruiser, Light (CLG-5) with Commander, Seventh Fleet (COMSEVENTHFLT) embarked; USS Enterprise, Attack Aircraft Carrier (Nuclear Propulsion) (CVAN-64); USS Coral Sea, Attack Carrier (CVA-43); USS Midway (CVA-41); USS Hancock (CVA-19); USS Okinawa, Amphibious Assault Ship (LPH-3); and USS Blue Ridge, Amphibious Command Ship (LCC-19) with CFT-76 embarked.

c. The MSC and MSC-contract ships, tugs and flat-deck barges were used extensively for transporting refugees, both military and civilian from Military Regions (MR's) 1 and 2 south to Cam Ranh Bay and later to Vung Tau and Phu Quoc Island. After the fall of Hue, Tan My and Da Nang, the entire refugee situation deteriorated rapidly. Since it was impossible to use aircraft, the only remaining means for moving refugees was sealift. All of the ships were loaded far beyond normal capacity. Deep draft ships with a normal capacity of 3,000 lifted between 7,000 and 8,000 persons. Aboard the VNN units, the decks and holds were filled to the maximum; some LST's carried 7,500 people; High Endurance Cutter (WHEC's) 5,000; and Patrol Craft Escort (PCE's) 2,000.

d. An extremely serious problem, stemming primarily from a lack of water and food for the refugees and the absence of embarked security forces, existed on board the deep draft ships. Armed Vietnamese troops posed a serious threat on all ships and one deep draft was commandeered by embarked troops and sailed to Vung Tau for debarkation, instead of to the originally scheduled Phu Quoc Island. That situation was rectified when refugee rations and water were supplied to each ship and USMC security forces were embarked to maintain order.

e. No refugee lift was undertaken by a US vessel prior to a formal request being received from the Ministry of Social Welfare and approval being obtained from the US Ambassador. The USN ships

16-E-9

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were initially prohibited from closing the beach to a point from which they could backhaul refugees and it was not until later that those ships actually carried Vietnamese refugees.

f. On 26 April, MSC had five ships located in the Saigon area; two deep drafts and the Boo Heung Pioneer, LST 117, at Newport as well as two deep drafts at Cat Lai. Those vessels (with the exception of Boo Heung Pioneer) sailed south to Vung Tau at first light on 28 April because of the increasing enemy threat to Saigon. The Boo Heung Pioneer, three tuges (Saigon 240, Chitose Maru and Asiatic Stamina) and four barges remained at Newport for contingency loading on 29 April. Despite some problems while alongside the pier, all units sailed during the afternoon of 29 April and reached international waters without incident.

g. Although initially it was the policy that all South Vietnamese evacuees be embarked in or transferred to MSC or MSC-contract ships, the large number of refugees arriving in small boats caused a reversal in that policy. All ships, including the Seventh Fleet units, finally embarked refugees and remained in the holding area off Vung Tau until all those who desired evacuation were on board.

#### 4. (FOUO) FIXED WING AIRLIFT OPERATIONS.

a. Beginning on 27 February, the 7th AF SOA, with offices at Tiger Ops on the flight line at TSN airfield, supervised the airlift of rice and kerosene to Cambodia. That effort continued until 12 April when the evacuation of Phnom Penh was initiated. However, in late March when the military situation in Vietnam began to deteriorate to the point that Saigon was threatened, a massive resupply effort was initiated to replenish and replace RVNAF military equipment lost to the enemy in MR's 1 and 2. Since four USAF officers were already operating the rice airlift at TSN, Lieutenant General (LTG) J. J. Burns, USAF, Commander, USSAG, tasked the 7th AF SOA military element to:

(1) Monitor the enemy situation around Saigon and advise incoming Military Airlift Command (MAC) aircraft of the current enemy antiaircraft artillery (AAA) threat;

(2) Assure the ground security of all USAF aircraft;

(3) Coordinate MAC arrivals and departures with USSAG/7th AF;  
and,

(4) Be the single point of contact for all C-141 and C-130 traffic at TSN including the coordination with Vietnamese officials on the off-loading/on-loading of USAF aircraft.

16-E-10

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b. In early April when the USAF resupply effort began, seven DC-8's of four civilian airlines were flying 20 to 24 sorties per day between TSN and Pochentong airfield, Cambodia. Beginning on 5 April, up to 11 C-141's per day were engaged in the RVNAF resupply effort. During the week of 5-12 April, aircraft parking problems arose at TSN. Major (MAJ) R. S. Delligatti, USAF, the SOA, in coordination with Colonel (COL) G. McCurdy, USAF, the Air Attache, met with Mr. Lan, the Vietnamese Director of Civil Aviation (DCA), in an effort to secure more ramp space for USAF aircraft. Mr. Lan assigned all ramp space formerly reserved for civilian air carriers and the two parking spaces on the north end of the parallel taxiway to MAC aircraft. That additional ramp space solved the parking problems. On 12 April, when the rice airlift terminated and the DC-8's departed, all MAC aircraft used the ramp directly in front of Tiger Ops for off-loading/on-loading.

c. The use of C-141's for the evacuation of American citizens and their dependents was authorized in early April, but some American citizens resisted evacuation. During the first week of the C-141 operation, only 40 to 50 passengers were manifested per day. The 7th AF SOA was initially assigned a complement of 11 security guards, one customs official and eight maintenance specialists for the processing of evacuees and the flight line operation of the C-141's. In addition, two officers from the transportation and air freight sections at Clark AB were assigned to assist in the aircraft off-loading of supplies and on-loading of passengers. After 12 April, the officers assigned to the 7th AF SOA and their duties were as follows:

SOA	MAJ R. S. Delligatti
Operations Officer (Day)	Captain (CPT) R. T. Coburn
Operations Officer (Night)	MAJ D. Hensley
Passenger Processing Coordinator	MAJ D. N. Orrell
Ramp and Air Freight Specialists	CPT F. Shapira
	CPT J. O'Brien

In addition, Senior Master Sergeant (SMSgt) G. Shaw, USAF, in coordination with the SOA, supervised all enlisted maintenance men. All security guards and customs inspectors, although assigned to the SOA, were commanded by an officer from the security squadron at Clark AB.

d. As the military situation around Saigon continued to deteriorate and the number of evacuees increased, the duties of the officers assigned to the SOA became more clearly defined and specialized. MAJ Delligatti, at the direction of COL McCurdy, was assigned three tasks:

(1) The single point of contact for evacuating special groups of Local Nationals (LN's) such as: US Mission employees; news media

16-E-11

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representatives; the intelligence community; and, finally, senior government officials; all with their respective families.

(2) The suborning of local immigration officials, the National Police and military security officials in order to insure their cooperation and the continued smooth flow of evacuees. (That function was accomplished by evacuating the families of the respective officials.)

(3) The exclusive control of World Airways orphan evacuation flights.

e. CPT Coburn and MAJ Hensley manned the desk at Tiger Ops on a 24-hour basis handling all communications. In coordination with the SOA, they were delegated the ultimate responsibility for the security of the C-141's and C-130's. MAJ Orrell was assigned to the DAO EPC and was the coordinator between the center and Tiger Ops for all manifested evacuees. CPT Shapira and CPT O'Brien, the two transportation specialists from Clark AB, controlled the ramp activities including aircraft parking, off-loading/on-loading and the control of all scheduled/unscheduled air freight.

f. The following are the significant events that occurred at TSN airfield beginning with the crash of the C-5A on 4 April until 29 April:

(1) 4 April: A USAF C-5A orphan evacuation flight crashed northeast of TSN.

(2) 5 April: The C-141 flow from Clark AB increased. The Vietnamese Army (ARVN) and VNAF resupply effort began via C-141's from Clark, Guam and Yokota. Tiger Ops was manned 24 hours a day to accommodate U-Tapao C-130's arriving at TSN between 2000 hours and 0600 hours. C-130's were primarily evacuating air freight that was backlogged on the flight line at the TSN terminal.

(3) 8 April: A VNAF F-5 bombed the Presidential Palace. Immediately thereafter a 24-hour curfew went into effect and the US airlift carriers threatened to evacuate their aircraft and crews. That latter problem was solved by negotiation between SOA members and airline officials.

(4) 11 April: Phnom Penh fell; the rice airlift terminated; the evacuation of Phnom Penh was initiated.

(5) 14 April: The SOA received a call shortly after midnight from Mr. E. J. Daly, President of World Airways, wanting to evacuate his local employees with a DC-8 that was formally assigned

16-E-12

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to the rice airlift. MAJ Delligatti and CPT Coburn advised Mr. Daly against using MAC contract aircraft for that purpose. Mr. Daly replied that he was leaving Saigon that night with his employees. MAJ Dellagatti called COL McCurdy who handled the affair. Mr. Daly left Saigon that morning via DC-8 without his local employees.

(6) 16 April: MAJ Delligatti was tasked by COL McCurdy with the movement of special groups. MAJ Delligatti began working with Mr. Brian Ellis, the senior Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) representative in Southeast Asia, on the evacuation of news media personnel from Saigon. During the next 10 days, MAJ Delligatti and Mr. Ellis evacuated approximately 700 LN's using Air America facilities. Mr. Mike Baltazar, an Air America operations representative, arranged for the use of the flight line area. That working relationship with Air America and Mr. Baltazar continued until 29 April.

(7) 18 April: MAJ Delligatti was tasked by Mr. G. Jacobson, Special Assistant to the Ambassador for Field Operations, and COL M. Lamont, Executive Officer of DAO, to secure a C-130 from U-Tapao for the special evacuation of Embassy personnel involved in sensitive intelligence activities. MAJ Delligatti and Mr. Baltazar planned the operation in coordination with the Office of the Special Assistant (OSA) representatives. Through the exclusive use of Air America facilities, 140 people were evacuated.

(8) 20 April: At approximately 2200 hours, CPT Shapira reported to Tiger Ops that the control tower operators and high ranking Vietnamese officials were preventing the movement of a passenger-loaded C-141. MAJ Delligatti proceeded to the flight line and found various officials, including Brigadier General (BG) Tien, VNAF Commander of the 5th Air Division, surrounding the aircraft. In addition, MAJ Tan, the senior immigration official at TSN and Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Nguu, VNAF Deputy Base Commander and Base Security Officer, were present. BG Tien informed MAJ Delligatti that he (Tien) was told that illegal passengers were aboard the C-141 (i.e., local Vietnamese without valid passports and/or exit visas and that he (Tien) would release the aircraft after a cursory inspection of the passengers. MAJ Delligatti informed BG Tien that the C-141 was US Government property and armed US security guards aboard the aircraft would prevent any inspection of passengers. MAJ Delligatti immediately called Major General (MG) Smith, DATT, and informed him of the situation. MG Smith told MAJ Delligatti to stand by the phone and that he would take appropriate action. In approximately 10 minutes, MG Smith informed MAJ Delligatti that MG Binh, Chief of National Police, had ordered the release of the C-141 and for MAJ Delligatti to so inform BG Tien. After a brief conversation, the C-141 was released. To prevent any recurrence of similar acts by Vietnamese

16-E-13

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officials, MAJ Delligatti was instructed by COL McCurdy to evacuate the families of selected National Police officials, Base Security officials and Immigration officials. The following day the families of BG Tien, LTC Nguu and MAJ Tan were evacuated, as was the family of COL Phuong, National Police.

(9) 21 April: In early afternoon, COL Michler, USAF, USSAG/7th AF, arrived to assume control of all SOA activities. At 1630H, Mr. Daly arrived on a World Airways 727 and parked at a prearranged spot on the Air America west ramp at TSN. Mr. Cliff Frink, USAID, had arranged for the evacuation of approximately 250 crippled orphans and 20 nuns from a Catholic orphanage operated by Father Crawford. COL Michler and MAJ Delligatti assisted in the loading of all passengers and the 727 departed at approximately 2100. In order to guarantee the safe passage of all orphans through Gate 1 at TSN, the family of COL Phuong of the National Police was allowed to evacuate aboard the World flight.

(10) 25 April: At 1630H, Mr. Daly arrived on the same 727 and again parked on Air America west ramp. Approximately 220 Montagnard orphans were evacuated accompanied by approximately five escorts and Mr. Daly at 1800H. At 1830H, COL McCurdy informed MAJ Delligatti of a special C-118 flight arriving that night for the evacuation of high government officials. MAJ Delligatti was instructed to park the aircraft on the Air America ramp and, at a prearranged hour, the Ambassador would briefly board the aircraft and then depart. Subsequently, four Embassy vehicles would arrive carrying approximately 15 passengers who would board the aircraft. The C-118 would then immediately depart. COL McCurdy instructed MAJ Delligatti to contact the C-118 through Saigon Center and give the crew the special parking instructions. Also, MAJ Delligatti was to lead the aircraft to the designated parking area, arrange for Air America personnel and equipment to assist in the parking and engine shutdown/restart, and lead the aircraft to the parallel taxiway for departure. Those tasks were accomplished by COL Michler and MAJ Delligatti. Subsequently, COL Michler and MAJ Delligatti were informed that ex-President Thieu and his family had boarded the C-118 and were evacuated to Taiwan.

(11) 27 April: Appropriate authorities made the decision to terminate all C-141 evacuation flights and use C-130's only.

(12) 28 April, 1800 hours: A flight of three A-37's equipped with MK-81 ordnance attacked the flight line area of TSN. A total of six bombs hit the VNAF parking area destroying numerous aircraft (at least three AC-119's and several C-47's). The last two bombs hit between VNAF base operations and the control tower. No USAF aircraft were damaged. The A-37's were equipped with both tip and four underslung wing tanks. Dive-bomb tactics were used with an estimated roll-in altitude of 5,000 feet and a release altitude

16-E-14

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of 2,500 feet. Pullout was estimated to be below 2,000 feet.

(13) 28 April, 1815 hours (approximate): Airlift stopped by command agencies. Two C-130's from Clark AB began holding south-east of TSN. At about 2000 hours, both C-130's were cleared by command agencies to land at TSN. Approximately 360 passengers were loaded and both aircraft departed without incident. At the same time, the flow of C-130's from Clark AB was reinitiated.

(14) 29 April, 0100-0330 hours: The first three C-130's arrived from Clark AB. The last two aircraft were carrying Class A cargo (BLU-82's) and were directed to the hot-cargo area to off-load. After the first Class A cargo aircraft was off-loaded, it returned to the ramp for passengers. Of the three aircraft two were loaded with passengers and the third was taxiing to the ramp area when the rocket attack began.

(15) 29 April, 0400 hours: An intense enemy rocket attack on TSN was initiated. A USAF C-130 was hit and destroyed by 122mm rockets while taxiing on the ramp near Tiger Ops. The crew of the destroyed C-130 boarded an adjacent USAF aircraft. The two remaining USAF C-130's departed with no injury to crew or passengers. A total of 654 passengers were processed and manifested between 1800 hours, 28 April and 0400 hours, 29 April.

(16) 29 April, 0430 hours: COL Michler and MAJ Delligatti arrived at the ECC. COL Michler had personally inspected the destroyed C-130 and verified that it was a USAF C-130 and that no fatalities were involved. MAJ Delligatti initiated the only remaining communications (VHF/129.6MHz) between the ECC and Tiger Ops. Initial assessment of the airfield and runway condition began via VHF. One Combat Control Team (CCT) member was dispatched to the control tower. CPT O'Brien began the ramp and runway inspection and reported salient facts to Tiger Ops via FM portable radio. MAJ Hensley and CPT Coburn were manning Tiger Ops and reporting airdrome conditions to MAJ Delligatti. COL Michler had established and was maintaining communications with Blue Chip and the USSAG/7th AF Battle staff.

(17) 29 April, 0430-0800 hours: Attack by Fire (ABF) reporting by the CCT and Tiger Ops personnel continued via VHF. MG Smith requested a plot of the intensity, position and type of ABF. Between 0500 hours and 0900 hours, estimated ABF intensity in the operations area of TSN (runway, ramp, VNAF parking area, DAO compound and passenger processing area) was 40 rounds per hour. At approximately 0700 hours, Tiger Ops reported that VNAF aircraft were jettisoning fuel tanks and ordnance on the active runway. In addition, one abandoned VNAF F-5 was blocking the entrance taxiway to the Tiger Ops ramp and passenger loading area. Approximately 40 vehicles and several hundred Vietnamese were occupying the

16-E-15

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runway area in an attempt to board two VNAF C-130's that were trying to launch. Concurrently, a VNAF AC-119 gunship was hit and destroyed by an enemy SA-7 near the northern perimeter of TSN.

(18) 29 April, 0730 hours (approximate): MG Smith asked COL Michler and MAJ Delligatti for an assessment of airdrome usability. COL Michler and MAJ Delligatti, in coordination with Tiger Ops personnel, reported that, in their opinion, the resumption of the fixed wing evacuation was not possible at that time. In effect, the runway was closed and in order to reopen the airdrome to USAF C-130's, the entire TSN area would have to be secured by USMC units. In addition, a sustained fixed wing evacuation was in jeopardy due to the probability of rioting by Vietnamese airmen and soldiers in an attempt to board the USAF C-130's. An attempt had been made to resume fixed wing operations. Between 0700-0800 hours, COL Michler had ordered the CCT to assume positions near the Pacific Architects and Engineers (PA&E) operations shack at the high-speed taxiway/ramp intersection in an effort to resume high-volume operations by transporting Vietnamese from the EPC through the Air Vietnam gate to PA&E. In addition, US citizens from downtown Saigon would be bussed directly to the ramp/hangar area near Tiger Ops. This plan had been worked out with BG Tien and LTC Nguu the previous day. The plan required small US Marine guard detachments at the Air Vietnam gate, PA&E operations, the Tiger Ops ramp, gate 5 near Tiger Ops and other points along the route from the EPC to the Air Vietnam gate. However, before this plan could be executed, it became clear that the airdrome was unusable and the CCT, Tiger Ops personnel and USMC security forces were retracted and eventually withdrawn into DAO compound.

(19) 29 April, 0800 hours: Lieutenant General (LTC) Minh, the VNAF commander and other top VNAF officers entered the DAO compound and requested evacuation by American aircraft. MG Smith had them detained and segregated until evacuation plans were executed. This event signalled the complete loss of the VNAF command and control and magnified the continued deterioration of an already volatile situation.

(20) 29 April, 0900 hours: Ambassador Martin arrived at the DAO. After receiving a briefing by COL LeGro, Chief, Operations Plans Division, DAO and COL McCurdy, MG Smith informed Ambassador Martin of his instructions to attempt evacuation of USMC personnel using C-130's.

(21) 29 April, 0930-1000 hours: Approximately 40 to 50 Vietnamese including VNAF officers and DCA personnel had entered Tiger Ops and were demanding evacuation. One VNAF officer was detained. MAJ Delligatti, in coordination with COL Michler, ordered the extraction of all 7th AF SOA personnel from Tiger Ops. In response to a request to COL McCurdy from COL Michler and MAJ Delligatti,

16-E-16

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six US Marines were sent to Tiger Ops and all US personnel were extracted from the flight line area. At that time, all ABF and airdrome status reporting ceased.

(22) 29 April, 1100 hours: COL McCurdy was informed by MAJ Delligatti that Mr. Lan, the DCA and six DCA personnel were in Tiger Ops. COL McCurdy asked MAJ Delligatti to inform Mr. Lan via VHF to telephone the ECC so that COL McCurdy could speak to him privately. COL McCurdy told Mr. Lan to walk the DCA personnel to the DAO compound. CPT Coburn was dispatched to the gate to identify Mr. Lan and his associates and escorted them into the DAO complex. After that time, all Vietnamese civilian and military command and control of the airdrome area was terminated.

(23) 29 April, 1200 hours: Total evacuation of the Air America compound by Air America helicopters was completed. Approximately 66 Vietnamese and key US and TCN Air America employees, who had stayed behind to coordinate the rooftop evacuation effort, were lifted to the DAO compound.

16-E-17

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## Section F

Personnel Processing1. (FOUO) PROCESSING OF EVACUEES FROM THE NORTHERN PROVINCES.

a. When the military situation in Vietnam resulted in evacuation of Mission employees, Vietnamese (VN) as well as US and Third Country Nationals (TCN) from Da Nang, Nha Trang and Qui Nhon, DAO Personnel Division employees met each arriving aircraft at the Air America Terminal to identify VN employees and insure that they were apprised of the disbursing operation at the Foreign Claims Office by the DAO civilian payroll section. Under the approved policy for processing such persons, they were paid their most recent salary and, subsequently, their separation allowance payments were computed for payment in the event that their services were no longer required after 30 days of temporary duty (TDY). Those employees whose services were to be continued were assigned new duties and kept on the rolls.

b. To assure initial contact with arriving VN employees, it was necessary to assign US and VN personnel specialists to work seven days a week and late into the evenings. Employees responded to that requirement in a most exemplary manner and performed admirably. Concurrently, the Embassy established a working group to coordinate activities related to all aspects of the evacuation of Mission employees and their families.

2. (FOUO) PROCESSING OF SAIGON EVACUEES.

a. On about 3 April, another phase of evacuation of Mission personnel began which involved identifying surplus or nonessential people and their dependents for US military airlift out of Vietnam. The DAO Personnel Division was the primary processing agency for DAO personnel. Other Mission organizations sent dependents and nonessential persons out of the country by commercial means.

b. DAO Divisions identified nonessential persons for whom the Personnel Division then prepared travel orders and Reduction In Force (RIF) notices which the divisions issued with instructions to report for immediate transportation out-of-country. At that point, the booking operation was moved from the Training Section to the DAO theater so that the greater numbers could be accommodated. Concurrently, the US personnel specialists began copying material from Official Personnel Folders (OPF's) of US employees so that essential papers, forms and documents could be forwarded to Travis AFB for use in reconstructing those records in the event of loss of the OPF's. OPF's were hand carried to Travis AFB daily for those employees leaving the country that day.

c. The most serious deterrent to the successful completion of the RIF/repatriation project was the matter of nonessential persons

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refusing to leave until they had the paperwork needed to take their locally acquired dependents with them. The magnitude of the dependent problem was far greater than had been anticipated and it soon was obvious that the Embassy would have to obtain some exceptional cooperation from the Government of Vietnam (GVN) if DAO employees were to be evacuated as scheduled. The Consul arranged for "packages" of marriage/adoption papers to be processed; the GVN agreed that such cases would be processed within three days.

d. On 17 April, MG Smith held a meeting with US military retirees during which he strongly encouraged them to leave. They, in turn, expressed a desire to leave but were unable to do so because they were bogged down with required GVN paperwork for their dependents' exit visas and passports. MG Smith then advised them that he was attempting to solve such problems by initiating a system eliminating all red tape; that program would start within three days at the DAO theater, administered by US Embassy Consular officers and representatives of GVN ministries.

e. By that time, the airlift processing operation was being conducted in the DAO Annex with C-141's and C-130's transporting passengers to Clark AB. With each day, processing efficiency progressively improved and passenger loads increased. That increase was due primarily to the greater flexibility in documentation allowed by the US Consul, which ultimately resulted in the authorization of a simple document, the "Affidavit of Support", by which a US citizen could affirm that named VN citizens were dependents/family members and that he/she would "guarantee" financial responsibility. The use of that document enabled US citizens to "sponsor" numbers of persons who were always wholly qualified for such sponsorship; however, Embassy instructions were to move the people listed on those affidavits only after they had been signed and sealed by a Consular officer. Close scrutiny of the persons listed thereon was not required nor applied, in order to keep the flow going.

f. By 24 April, the majority of US citizens other than essential mission employees had been moved out-of-country and passenger manifests consisted mostly of VN citizens. A curious thing then occurred; that US males began appearing with VN dependents, and it was subsequently evident that those latter-day "sponsors" were recent arrivals who had come into Vietnam via commercial flights from Hong Kong or Taipei.

g. With the movement of persons accelerating, the VN employees of the DAO were included in the evacuation, along with their immediate families. The lateness of the official inclusion of those persons had prompted various divisions and organizations to organize special groups of employees before official quotas were established for the distribution of seats among all elements of the DAO. As a result, some elements moved all of their employees while others were unable to move significant numbers.

16-F-2

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h. On the evening of 28 April, after the bombing attack on Tan Son Nhut (TSN) airfield, it was apparent that the fixed wing airlift operation was near an end. The approximately 3,200, mostly VN, people in the DAO-Annex awaiting airlift at that time were later moved by helicopter in Operation FREQUENT WIND on 29 April and the six weeks of personnel processing in support of evacuation operations ended.

### 3. (FOUO) OPERATION OF THE DAO ANNEX EVACUATION PROCESSING CENTER

a. The transfer of evacuee processing to the DAO Annex on 20 April, saw the culmination of all the planning for a fixed wing airlift from TSN. The movement of passengers through the various checkpoints in the system to US military aircraft on TSN worked almost exactly as it was planned. As the paperwork processing efficiency increased daily, so too did the efficiency of the workers who formed passenger loads for the evacuation aircraft, the Clark Air Base (AB) Security Police who performed anti-hijacking searches and the Clark AB aerial port specialists who marshalled and transported passengers and baggage from the Annex to the aircraft loading areas.

b. Evacuation by C-141's was originally scheduled to be a daylight operation on 20 and 21 April. When larger than anticipated numbers of evacuees appeared at the Annex on 21 April and when the processing system demonstrated a capability to handle greater than forecast loads, the decision was made to begin round-the-clock operations using C-141's during the day and C-130's at night. It was that decision that made it possible to move 34,514 evacuees through the Evacuation Processing Center (EPC) between 0800H on 21 April and midnight on 28 April.

c. The magnitude of the evacuee load affected virtually all phases of the processing system but particularly the following areas:

(1) The sanitation facilities at the gymnasium, swimming pool and bowling alley were severely overburdened. Construction of slit trenches, garbage dumps and latrines helped but the volume of evacuees in the final three days was too much for those waste disposal facilities.

(2) The volume of evacuees which prompted the round-the-clock operations took the processing staff by surprise. By 21 April, most sections in DAO had been drawn down by the departure of civilian employees and were severely shorthanded. The early departure of some military members of DAO, the Four Party Joint Military Team (FPJMT) and the Joint Casualty Resolution Center (JCRC) was particularly noticeable when their military presence was badly needed. As a result, the workload in the passenger processing system was borne by the Clark AB temporary duty airmen, a few DAO officers and civilian volunteers (American and Vietnamese) from various sources. Local National (LN) employees from DAO and other Mission organizations performed as interpreters, briefers, baggage handlers, cleanup crews and security guards. Without the voluntary help of civilians from all sources, the evacuation would have failed.

16-F-3

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(3) The use of passenger manifests slowed the processing cycle. However, passenger manifests were the single thread of control over departing groups. The manifests were a mandatory requirement of the Military Airlift Command (MAC) aircrews, they provided initial statistical data on evacuees and they were the sole means of verifying who processed through the system and boarded the aircraft.

(4) Anti-hijacking procedures (baggage checking and handling) were another MAC requirement. Strict searches and a shortage of baggage trucks caused some early slowdowns. Lack of guidance on baggage allowances (some American sponsors carried 20-30 bags) caused delays. In later days, after the initial trials and errors, the anti-hijacking procedures caused few, if any, delays.

(5) Crowds (at one time estimated as high as 10,000) in the Annex area caused security problems for personnel processors. These problems were reduced in later stages by adding more checkpoints and tightening Annex entrance screening. Had additional military security forces been introduced earlier, the problem would not have existed.

d. Two important airlift lessons can be derived from the Saigon experience:

(1) Aircraft passenger load limitations were an example of "gradualism" which generated excessive evacuee backlogs at the EPC. Further, aircraft, always exposed to an enemy ground fire threat, carried what later would be only a partial load. Initially, 75 evacuees were allowed aboard C-130's; 94 aboard C-141's. As the evacuation progressed, loads were increased to 180 for both aircraft. Earlier abandonment of "standard" loading would have meant either less exposure of aircraft in a hostile environment or many more passenger miles per sortie. The fact that an "emergency" had been declared should not have affected loading as it did. The fact that military aircraft were used for evacuation in the first place implied "emergency" in the minds of many.

(2) During the 10 days of the mass airlift, 20-29 April, the true worth of on time takeoffs and block times was realized. As long as aircraft landed at, or close to, planned intervals (normally, 15 minutes for C-130's), passenger handling people on the ground could plan for and meet scheduled block times. Ground times for extended periods were reduced to 10-15 minutes. However, with intermittent arrivals and subsequent bunching of aircraft on the ramp, the limited resources on the ground (e.g., buses, trucks and processors) could not keep pace. The ultimate results of intermittent arrivals were loading delays and increased aircraft ground times. The only ways found to recoup from intermittent arrivals were to delay flights at Clark AB, to back-haul opportune cargo instead of people or to load preformed groups of evacuees who were authorized to bypass normal processing procedures.

16-F-4

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e. In retrospect, the greatest bottleneck in the personnel processing system was the occasional non-availability of buses to move evacuees from the EPC to the flight line. Baggage trucks were obtained from various sources and periodic shortages of Vietnamese drivers were made up by using military and civilian volunteers. Without some alternate means (e.g., large trucks) to move evacuees when buses were pulled for higher priority runs, the airlift periodically slowed down and several times stopped for short periods. The key lesson in an airlift operation where the processing area is remote from the flight line, is that sufficient dedicated transportation is needed to keep the head of the processing line moving. Otherwise, the result will be aircraft ground delays and a potentially dangerous buildup of anxious evacuees at the EPC; such a buildup did occur during the Saigon evacuation. One might argue that locating the EPC closer to the flight line would have reduced or eliminated the need for buses and been a preferable option. However, the Da Nang experience, where large groups of anxious people were allowed to form on the flight line and subsequently inundate evacuation aircraft, vividly demonstrated the fallacy of that thinking.

16-F-5

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## Section 6

Movement of Sensitive Vietnamese Nationals1. (C) GENERAL:

a. On 16 April, the Military Liaison Office (Detachment K, 500th Military Intelligence (MI) Group, DAO Saigon Element) was tasked to provide technical and material guidance and assistance to other US elements involved in the evacuation of certain sensitive Vietnamese and their families. Priorities for evacuation were established and later revised to comply with DAO/US Embassy direction. Immediate priority was given to the following:

(1) Relatives of US military persons still in the Republic of Vietnam (RVN): specifically, US Military Intelligence persons.

(2) Local national (LN) civilian employees of intelligence/operations branches of DAO to include their immediate families.

(3) Families of key Vietnamese (VN) counterparts; later followed by their military sponsors themselves.

(4) Other persons and families identified by Chief, DAO Operations and Plans Division and the Defense Attache (DATT).

(5) Those LN's not operationally involved with US Military Intelligence.

b. An undeclared evacuation of US citizens and their dependents was well underway by 7 April. Then, a decision was made to contact a responsible US Embassy official for authority to secure dedicated aircraft for moving intelligence personnel; those persons would leave without any of the associated US or Vietnamese legal paperwork. COL W. E. LeGro, USA, Chief, DAO Operations and Plans Division, approached the US Embassy on several occasions for a positive decision. On each occasion an agreement in principle was given but Embassy approval to request dedicated aircraft was postponed. An entirely different approach was used on 17 April with the US military evacuation planners consisting of the several service Attaches: COL Wahle, USA; COL McCurdy, USAF; and CAPT Carmody, USN. COL McCurdy agreed with the immediate need for the initiation of black flights for certain LN's. Prior to approaching MG Smith, the Defense Attache (DATT); a meeting was held with Mr. Walter Burke, Chief, Consular Section, US Embassy. Mr. Burke agreed in principle with a need for black evacuation flights and further stated that authority to use such flights was already vested in MG Smith. Mr. Burke stated that US Immigration and Naturalization officers would accept LN's arriving in a

# CONFIDENTIAL

black category. A second meeting was held during which Mr. Burke reiterated his earlier comments, this time to MG Smith. Persons who attended that latter meeting included MG Smith; BG L. W. Svendsen, USAF, Dep DATT since 15 April; COL McCurdy; COL Wahle; COL LeGro; Mr. Burke; and CPT A. Gembara, Military Liaison Officer, 500th MI Group. MG Smith, after the briefings, stated that he would make a decision on the matter later in the day. At approximately 2000H hours, CPT Gembara and Mr. J. M. Gill, 500th MI Group, met with MG Smith at his quarters and obtained written authorization for two initial C-141's for evacuation of intelligence/operations-associated persons. The first two C-141's departed on 18 April and a decision to allocate one C-141 per day (for approximately 250 intelligence/operations associated passengers) was established; the 250 figure remained flexible and depended on aircraft availability.

c. As of 19 April, the Military Liaison Office (MLO) had ceased all normal operations other than handling counterpart spot reports and was reconfigured to function as an operations center for black evacuation. Based on instructions from COL LeGro, the MLO was also responsible for evacuating DAO Operations and Plans Division employees and families. An average 250-350 passengers were moved each day between 18 and 28 April by the MLO on dedicated aircraft.

## 2. (C) SPECIAL MISSIONS.

a. In addition to the one-aircraft-per-day allocation for intelligence/operations personnel, several special evacuation missions assigned to MLO were consolidated with regularly scheduled flights while others, based on the number of passengers, required additional aircraft. A breakout of Special Missions follows:

<u>Date(s)</u>	<u>Requestor</u>	<u>Number/Sponsor</u>	<u>Aircraft</u>
21-23 Apr	MG Smith	450/GEN Cao Van Vien, CoIS, RVNAF	2
26-28 Apr	OSA	35+/OSA	-
26 Apr	COL LeGro	100/J2, JCS	1
27 Apr	COL LeGro	100/A2, VNAF	1
27 Apr	COL LeGro	100/VSS, VNAF	1
28 Apr	LTC Fletcher	300+/DAO C&L Sect	2

16-G-1

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4. (FOUO) EXCERPTS FROM THE REPORT OF COLONEL A. P. HODGES, US ARMY, CHIEF, OPERATIONS AND TRAINING BRANCH, OPERATIONS AND PLANS DIVISION, DAO.

a. "In late March, as a result of the rapidly deteriorating military situation in the Republic of Vietnam, a previously planned clandestine organization was activated for the purpose of evacuating selected Vietnamese citizens to other countries. This organization was developed and operated with branch personnel and the cooperation of other agencies and people, military and civilian, US and Vietnamese, with whom rapport had been established over a period of time in the normal conduct of our duties. The organization was completely self-contained to include off-base safe houses, on-base safe houses, transportation, communications (AM/FM radios, telephones), administrative, documentation and physical security capabilities.

b. "The official movement of our Division's US employees and their dependents began on or about 4 April and continued somewhat sporadically through 19 April. The major problem encountered and not initially addressed, was the movement of 'undocumented' dependents of US citizens. The Operations and Plans Division began with 320 US employees plus dependents. This was cut to approximately 200 by 18 April. By 21 April, the pace picked up and we began moving local national employees, their families and some RVNAF dependents. We were also asked to assist in the movement of some high risk persons sent to us by the Political Section of the US Embassy, as well as military counterparts' dependents.

c. "The procedures utilized were rather unremarkable. Evacuees were assembled at off-base safe houses, briefed, manifested when appropriate and transported by carryall and sedan to previously arranged air transport for movement out-of-country. The vast majority of the evacuees were initially processed through the evacuation center but later block spaces were set aside by the air movement people enabling movement from safe houses directly to aircraft which greatly enhanced the procedure.

d. "The most difficult aspect of the operation was getting past the Vietnamese police checkpoints on entering Tan Son Nhut Air Base. This was successfully accomplished by the acquisition of a number of blank authenticated official Vietnamese documents certifying that the evacuees were being transported to Phu Quoc Island to be reunited with refugee family members. The actual names of the evacuees were typed thereon, so when ID cards were spot checked by police, suspicion was not aroused. The ruse worked to the very end.

e. "We demonstrated the capability to provide evacuees to the flight line on 30-60 minutes notice at any time. During the period 21-28 April, we moved an average of 250 evacuees each day. There

16-G-4

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were days when as few as 80 and as many as 550 were moved. We were hampered only by a lack of aircraft space and surface transportation, although the latter was never very serious. We had the capability to move up to 50 persons an hour directly to the flight line with manifest completed and baggage checked. We never reached this maximum.

f. "An official count of the number of evacuees cannot be reconstructed at this writing because retained copies of manifests have not been recovered; they may have been abandoned under enemy pressure in the terminal stages of the effort. Also, little or no manifesting was accomplished during the helicopter lifts on 29 April. However, approximately 2,000 people were processed through our system, most of whom were DAO employees and their dependents. A number of high risk civilian and military families were also moved but accounted for only about 20% of the total. The system was completely purged when we were forced by enemy action to cease operating. Although it is apparent that a considerable number of potential evacuees would have continued to materialize, we broke no promises and abandoned no one to whom we had committed ourselves, including the courageous Vietnamese volunteers who refused evacuation earlier to remain with the operation until we could no longer function."

10-1-5

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## Section H

OPERATION TALON VISE/FREQUENT WIND1. (FOUO) EXCERPTS FROM THE REPORT OF LIEUTENANT COLONEL THOMAS G. TOBIN, US AIR FORCE, CHIEF, PLANS SECTION, OPERATIONS AND PLANS DIVISION, DAO.

a. "This report addresses final planning efforts and adjustments made to the evacuation plans for Vietnam. The rapid fall of Da Nang and Nha Trang dictated a critical review of the assumptions contained in the USSAG/7AF CONPLAN 5060V, dated 28 February 1975. Assumptions 3 and 4 were suspect.

(1) "Assumption 3 stated, 'The total number of US non-combatants and designated alien personnel to be evacuated from Vietnam will approximate 8,000.' The figure of 8,000 was a fair estimate. However, the need to protect the lives of the Vietnamese who had served as US employees for years as well as the need to use a 'mixed load' concept to help maintain crowd control and order, magnified the total to be evacuated by an average factor of 10.

(2) "Assumption 4 stated, 'The Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) will not interfere with the evacuation of US non-combatants and other designated personnel from RVN and may support or assist US evacuation efforts.' During the evacuation of Da Nang and Nha Trang, the RVNAF were generally passive until such time as the initial stages of panic and the 'last plane/ship out' fear ate away at the crowds. There were instances of forceful entry into loading areas, forceful boarding of aircraft and ships using weapons and the use of small arms and grenades in an attempt to prevent the evacuation of Vietnamese by those who were not lucky enough to get on board.

b. "Prudent reassessment of those two assumptions dictated a review and modification of the MR 3 and MR 4 evacuation plans, and particularly that for Saigon.

c. "The original US Embassy evacuation plan for Saigon called for using assembly points followed by overland transportation to 20 outlying large Helicopter Landing Zones (HLZ). If travel through the streets of Saigon in a passive mode could not be assumed and guaranteed, the original 20 HLZ's were too far from the assembly points to be used safely.

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This detailed review resulted in the coordinated air and surface metropolitan evacuation plan executed on 29 April and included the modification of the DAO compound into an independent HLZ complex in the event Tan Son Nhut (TSN) could not be used.

d. "The DAO area originally called for using the TSN ramp and flight line and the DAO softball field as flight line and helicopter extraction points. No major changes were made in the TSN ramp and flight line plans. DAO planners realized that an exceptional environment of cooperation would have to be made and maintained with TSN base officials and forces in order to assure the use of TSN as a continuing part of the evacuation program. That environment was established and maintained for a period of 25 days, an exceptional feat under the circumstances."

## 2. (S) TEXT OF CTG 79.1 MESSAGE 021510Z MAY 75

"1. (U)...THE FOLLOWING AFTER ACTION REPORT INCLUDING LESSONS LEARNED IS SUBMITTED FOR THE NINTH MARINE AMPHIBIOUS BRIGADE.

### 2. (S) SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS.

A. COMMAND SUMMARY. ON 26 MARCH 1975, THE 9TH MARINE AMPHIBIOUS BRIGADE [MAB], COMMANDED BY BGEN R. E. CAREY, WAS ACTIVATED FOR PLANNING CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS, AS DIRECTED. INITIALLY, THE 9TH MAB CONSISTED OF THE 33RD AND 35TH MARINE AMPHIBIOUS UNITS [MAU'S]. ON 11 APRIL 1975, THE MAB REPORTED TO CTF [COMMANDER TASK FORCE] 76 FOR PLANNING OPERATION TALON VISE (SUBSEQUENTLY RENAMED OPERATION FREQUENT WIND). ON 13 APRIL 1975, THE 31ST MAU WAS CHOPPED FOR PLANNING TO THE BRIGADE. ON 18 APRIL 1975, THE 9TH MAB, NOW CONSISTING OF THREE MAU'S, THE 31ST, 33RD AND 35TH, WAS REORGANIZED INTO A DOCTRINALLY STRUCTURED MARINE AMPHIBIOUS BRIGADE CONSISTING OF A HEAD-QUARTERS, RLT [REGIMENTAL LANDING TEAM] -4, PROV MAG [PROVISIONAL MARINE AIR GROUP] -39, A BLSG [BRIGADE LOGISTIC SUPPORT GROUP], AND ADDITIONALLY, A SECURITY DETACHMENT FORCE SUBSEQUENTLY CALLED THE AMPHIBIOUS EVACUATION SECURITY FORCE (AESF). THIS WAS THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE WHICH REPORTED TO CTF 76 FOR OPERATIONS ON 20 APRIL 1975. COMMENCING WITH ITS ACTIVATION AND CONTINUING THROUGH EXECUTION, CONCURRENT AND DETAILED PLANNING WAS CONDUCTED WITH CTF 76.

(1) GROUND SECURITY FORCE (GSF) ADVANCE PARTY. ON 20 APRIL 1975, BASED ON AUTHORITY RECEIVED FROM THE JCS, A FIVE MAN GSF ADVANCE COMMAND ELEMENT ARRIVED IN SAIGON

16-H-2

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# SECRET

TO ASSIST IN PLANNING AND CONDUCT OF OPERATION "FREQUENT WIND". THE GROUP WAS COMPOSED OF THE DEPUTY BRIGADE COMMANDER (COL W. W. TAYLOR, JR.), A FIELD GRADE COMMUNICATIONS-ELECTRONICS OFFICER [CEO], FIELD GRADE NAVAL AVIATOR, AND EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE DISPOSAL (EOD) SPECIALISTS.

(A) EARLY EMPLOYMENT INCLUDED BRIEFINGS BY THE COMMANDER AND HIS STAFF AT COMMUSSAG/7AF, NKP, THAILAND AND THE EMBASSY AND DAO OFFICIALS AT SAIGON. AUGMENTATION WAS PROVIDED FROM 9TH MAB ASSETS TO FORM AND TRAIN THREE HLZ CONTROL TEAMS AND PROVIDE SUFFICIENT COMMUNICATORS TO SUPPORT THE GSF COMMANDER ON ARRIVAL AT THE DAO COMPOUND.

(B) CONTINUOUS LIAISON WAS MAINTAINED WITH THE EMBASSY, DAO EMERGENCY CONTROL CENTER, OIC EVACUATION CONTROL TEAM, OIC MARSHALLING TEAMS, CEO AND AIR AMERICA IN FURTHERANCE OF INSTRUCTIONS PROVIDED BY CG, 9TH MAB.

## B. GROUND SECURITY FORCE OPERATIONS SUMMARY.

(1) AT 291215H APRIL 1975, THE GSF RECEIVED THE ORDER TO EXECUTE OPERATION "FREQUENT WIND". AN ADVANCE PARTY ON THE SCENE AT THE DAO COMPOUND PRIOR TO L-HOUR PROVED TO BE ADVANTAGEOUS SINCE THE PLAN AS ENVISIONED BY THE GROUND SECURITY FORCES WAS FULLY COORDINATED AND, IN FACT, INTEGRATED WITH THE DAO PLANS FOR THE PROCESSING AND MARSHALLING OF U. S. CITIZENS, THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS AND DESIGNATED VIETNAMESE REFUGEES. BECAUSE OF THE PREPOSITIONING OF RADIO OPERATORS WITHIN THE DAO COMPOUND, ALL COMMUNICATIONS LINKS WERE ESTABLISHED IMMEDIATELY UPON THE ORDER TO EXECUTE, THUS ELIMINATING ANY INITIAL CONFUSION UPON ARRIVAL OF THE MAIN ELEMENTS OF THE GROUND SECURITY FORCES.

(2) AT 291315H CG NINTH MAB DEPARTED USS BLUE RIDGE FOR THE DAO COMPOUND ARRIVING AT 291350H. THE GSF COMMENCED LOADING ABOARD CH-53 HELICOPTERS FROM HMH-462 AND HMH-463 AND INITIAL ELEMENTS TOUCHED DOWN IN THE DAO COMPOUND AT 291506H TO THE CHEERS OF AWAITING EVACUEES ALMOST ALL OF WHOM WERE OVERCOME BY EMOTION AT THE SIGHT OF THE ORGANIZED AND WELL DISCIPLINED MARINES. THE SIGHT OF THESE MARINES SIGNIFIED TO THE EVACUEES THAT THERE WOULD BE A TOMORROW. THE EXTRACTION OF EVACUEES COMMENCED IMMEDIATELY IN A SMOOTH AND ORDERLY FASHION.

16-H-3

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# SECRET

(3) THE FORCES OF BLT [BATTALION LANDING TEAM] 2/4 UNDER THE COMMAND OF LTCOL G. P. SLADE DEPLOYED TO THEIR ASSIGNED SECURITY AREAS. THE PLANNING FOR THIS OPERATION PROVED TO BE COMPLETELY COORDINATED AND UNDERSTOOD DOWN TO THE FIRE TEAM LEVEL. THIS STERLING EXECUTION CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE EXCELLENT SMALL UNIT LEADERSHIP AND NUMEROUS BRIEFINGS THAT HAD BEEN CONDUCTED UNDER THE CONTINUING DIRECTION OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER OF RLT-4, COLONEL A. M. GRAY. THE BLT 2/4 FORCES WERE AUGMENTED BY THE 3RD PLATOON, COMPANY C, BLT 1/9 UNDER THE ABLE LEADERSHIP OF FIRST LIEUTENANT THOMPSON BOWERS. THIS PLATOON OPERATING UNDER THE MOST TRYING OF CIRCUMSTANCES FROM 261100H, HAD BEEN SUBJECTED TO INCOMING ARTILLERY AND ROCKET FIRE UNTIL RELIEVED ABOUT 291600H.

(4) COINCIDENT WITH THE INSERTION OF 865 MARINES FROM BLT 2/4, A READY REACTION SPARROW HAWK PLATOON FROM COMPANY A, BLT 1/9 WAS LAUNCHED ABOARD TWO CH-46 AIRCRAFT. THE HIGH STATE OF READINESS OF BOTH BLT 1/9 AND BLT 3/9 WAS APPARENT AS EACH WAS POISED WITH SPARROW HAWK TEAMS AND A COMMAND GROUP WITH TWO COMPANIES FOR THE CALL TO LAUNCH IF REQUIRED.

(5) AS THE EVACUATION PROCESS AT THE DAO COMPOUND CONTINUED THE SITUATION AT THE AMERICAN EMBASSY BEGAN TO UNFOLD. THE NUMBER OF EVACUEES PRESENT FAR EXCEEDED THAT PLANNED FOR BY THE GROUND SECURITY FORCE. THE SECURITY PROVIDED BY THE SMALL MARINE SECURITY GUARD DETACHMENT AT THE EMBASSY PROVED TO BE INSUFFICIENT TO CONTROL THE LARGE CROWDS. THREE PLATOONS (130 MARINES) FROM BLT 2/4 WERE HELD LIFTED FROM THE DAO COMPOUND TO THE AMERICAN EMBASSY BETWEEN 291700H AND 292100H. THE TOTAL FORCE OF 171 MARINES PROVED TO BE A SAVING FACTOR FOR THE CONTINUED ORDERLY EVACUATION AT THE EMBASSY. A TOTAL NOT TO EXCEED 100 EVACUEES HAD BEEN ANTICIPATED FROM THE EMBASSY. THIS EXTRACTION TO BE ACCOMPLISHED BY AIR AMERICA. HOWEVER, WHEN THE EVACUATION TERMINATED, A TOTAL OF 978 U. S. CITIZENS AND 1,120 THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS AND VIETNAMESE REFUGEES HAD BEEN EVACUATED FROM THAT LOCATION BY MARINE FORCES.

(6) AT THE DAO COMPOUND, A TOTAL OF 395 U. S. CITIZENS AND 4,475 REFUGEES WERE EVACUATED IN AN ORDERLY MANNER. THE GROUND SECURITY FORCES BEGAN TO WITHDRAW AT 292250H FROM THE DAO ANNEX WITHOUT ANY SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS. THE FIRST ELEMENTS OF BLT 2/4 WERE EXTRACTED FROM THE DAO COMPOUND AT 292250H TO RETURN TO AMPHIBIOUS SHIPPING. AT

16-H-4

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ABOUT 292250H, BGEN CAREY, THE GROUND SECURITY FORCE COMMANDER, DEPARTED THE DAO COMPOUND FOR RETURN TO USS BLUE RIDGE VIA USS MIDWAY PASSING CONTROL ASHORE TO COLONEL A. M. GRAY, COMMANDING OFFICER, RLT-4. THIS TRANSITION WAS SMOOTH SINCE THE AUSTERE STAFF WHICH HAD FUNCTIONED DURING THE INITIAL PHASE OF THE OPERATION UNDER THE DIRECTION OF BGEN CAREY CONTINUED UNDER COLONEL GRAY. AT 300012H THE LAST GROUND SECURITY FORCE ELEMENTS FROM THE DAO COMPOUND CONDUCTED A SUCCESSFUL EXTRACTION AS THE NOISE OF TANK FIRING BEGAN TO DRAW EVER CLOSER TO THE DAO COMPOUND. AS THE LAST TWO CH-53 HELICOPTERS LIFTED OFF, SMOKE AND FLAMES SPREAD IN THE COMPOUND AS A RESULT OF THE ACTIVATION OF PREVIOUSLY POSITIONED THERMITE GRENADES.

(7) THE EVACUATION AT THE EMBASSY CONTINUED THROUGHOUT THE EARLY MORNING HOURS. THE EVACUATION OF GROUND SECURITY FORCES FROM THIS LOCATION BEGAN AT ABOUT 300400H AND CONTINUED UNTIL THE LAST CH-46 LIFTED OFF THE EMBASSY ROOFTOP AT 300753H WITH 11 MARINES ABOARD. THE PERFORMANCE OF THE MARINES AT THE EMBASSY WAS EXCELLENT. THEY MAINTAINED A COOL AND TRULY PROFESSIONAL ATTITUDE THROUGHOUT DESPITE RECEIVING SMALL ARMS FIRE FROM NEARBY BUILDINGS. NO COMBAT CASUALTIES OCCURRED WITHIN THE GROUND SECURITY FORCE. ONLY THREE NON-SERIOUS, NON-COMBAT CASUALTIES OCCURRED AMONG GROUND SECURITY FORCES THROUGHOUT THE OPERATION.

## C. AIR OPERATIONS SUMMARY.

(1) SYNOPSIS: PROVMAG-39 UNDER THE COMMAND OF COL F. G. MCLENON WAS ORDERED TO EXECUTE OPERATION "FREQUENT WIND", OPTION IV AT 1215H 29 APRIL 1975 WITH AN ESTABLISHED L-HOUR OF 1230H 29 APRIL 1975. TO PROPERLY POSITION GSF, GET THE REQUIRED NUMBER OF HELOS AIRBORNE AND ASSEMBLE THE PROPER WAVES OF AIRCRAFT REQUIRED, A TWO HOUR LEAD TIME, AS SPECIFIED IN AIR OPERATIONS PLANNING WAS REQUIRED. AFTER THESE FACTORS WERE CONSIDERED A NEW L-HOUR WAS ESTABLISHED BY CTF 76 AS 1500H 29 APRIL 1975. HELICOPTERS WERE CROSS-DECKED TO LOAD THE ASSIGNED TROOPS ON VARIOUS CTF 76 AMPHIBIOUS SHIPS TO ACHIEVE THE L-HOUR ESTABLISHED. THE FIRST FLIGHT OF HELICOPTERS WAS DISPATCHED FOR THE DAO COMPOUND, SAIGON, AT 1430H WITH GSF PERSONNEL EMBARKED. AH-1J HELO ESCORT AIRCRAFT WERE LAUNCHED AND ESCORTED THE FLIGHTS INTO THE SAIGON AREA. TWO CH-46 SAR [SEARCH AND RESCUE] AND TWO MEDEVAC [MEDICAL EVACUATION] HELOS WERE PRE-LAUNCHED AND ON STATION AT PRE-DESIGNATED POSITIONS IN SUPPORT OF GSF INSERTION AND EVACUEE EXTRACTIONS. A QUICK

16-H-5

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# SECRET

REACTION FORCE (SPARROW HAWK) OF MARINES WAS AIRBORNE ALSO IN TWO CH-46 AIRCRAFT TO SUPPORT ANY EMERGENCY REINFORCEMENT REQUIREMENT OR TO ASSIST IN RECOVERING DOWNED AIRCRAFT AND PERSONNEL. THE FIRST FLIGHT OF SIX AIRCRAFT TOUCHED DOWN IN THE DAO COMPOUND AT 1506H, UNLOADED THEIR GSF, AND DEPARTED WITH EVACUEES LOADED AT 1512H. THE SUBSEQUENT WAVES ARRIVED AND A SMOOTH ORDERLY FLOW OF SUCCESSIVE GSF INSERTIONS AND EVACUEE EXTRACTION WAS ESTABLISHED. THE HELICOPTERS WORKED IN A CONTINUOUS ENVIRONMENT OF SMALL ARMS FIRE, AAA, SA-7 MISSILES AND INCOMING ROUNDS OF ARTILLERY DURING THE ENTIRE OPERATION. CLOSE COVER ESCORT WAS PROVIDED ALONG THE HELO ROUTES AND IN THE LANDING ZONES BY AH-1J COBRAS. THE SAR, MEDEVAC, QUICK REACTION FORCE (SPARROW HAWK) AND A SPECIAL FLIGHT OF AIRCRAFT TO EXTRACT THE AMBASSADOR WERE ALL ON STATION DURING THE OPERATION. AS THE OPERATION PROGRESSED INTO THE HOURS OF DARKNESS, WEATHER STARTED TO DETERIORATE, FURTHER INCREASING THE DIFFICULTY OF THE ENORMOUS TASK AHEAD OF THE AIR CREWS. UPON COMPLETION OF EVACUATION OPERATION FROM THE DAO COMPOUND, THE GSF EXTRACTION COMMENCED AT 2250H AND COMPLETED AT 0012H 30 APR 75. AFTER LANDING AT DAO THE CGSF WAS INFORMED OF THE REQUIREMENT TO EXTRACT FROM EMBASSY AND THE FACT THAT SOME 2000 PEOPLE HAD TO BE EVACUATED. IT WAS NECESSARY TO PROVIDE IMMEDIATE REINFORCEMENT TO SECURITY MARINES AT THE EMBASSY BEFORE EVACUATION COULD BE COMMENCED. A SPARROW HAWK WAS INSERTED AND AFTER ZONES WERE CLEARED OF PEOPLE EVACUATION WAS INITIATED. THIS REQUIREMENT CONSUMED VALUABLE DAYLIGHT HOURS AS FULL SCALE EVACUATIONS WITH CH-53'S AND CH-46'S COULD NOT COMMENCE UNTIL FULLY READY AT 1740. CH-46'S WERE LANDED ON THE ROOF TOP PAD AND CH-53'S WERE UTILIZED IN THE PARKING LOT AT THE BASE OF THE EMBASSY BUILDING. AIR CREWS FLEW ANYWHERE FROM 12 TO 17 HOURS IN BAD WEATHER IN SUCH A HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT, THEY WERE TASKED TO LIMITS WHICH COULD NEVER HAVE BEEN ANTICIPATED, AND PERFORMED SUPERBLY. AIR CREW DISCIPLINE IN CONFORMING TO ESTABLISHED RULES OF ENGAGEMENT WAS OUTSTANDING AND NOT A ROUND WAS FIRED BY THE MARINE HELOS DURING THE EVACUATION. THE MISSION WAS COMPLETED AT 0835H 30 APRIL 1975 WITH EXTRACTION AND RETURN OF THE LAST GSF PERSONNEL LANDING ABOARD CTF 76 SHIPS. AIR CREW LOSSES SUSTAINED DURING THIS TRYING MISSION WERE TWO CH-46 PILOTS WHO WERE LOST AT SEA AFTER CONTACTING THE WATER DURING A CARRIER APPROACH. ONE ADDITIONAL AIRCRAFT, AN AH-1J, WAS LOST WHEN IT DITCHED AT SEA DUE TO FUEL EXHAUSTION. BOTH AH-1J PILOTS WERE RECOVERED WITH NO INJURIES.

16-H-6

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## (2) SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

- (A) 291200 EXECUTE FREQUENT WIND RECEIVED L HOUR 1230
  - (B) 291230 FIRST HELOS LAUNCHED FOR PRE L HOUR MULTI-DECK OPERATIONS.
  - (C) 291245 AUTHORITY TO ADJUST L HOUR.
  - (D) 291306 L HOUR SET 1400.
  - (E) 291346 L HOUR SET 1500.
  - (F) 291506H APR FIRST FLIGHT OF AIRCRAFT ON DECK AT DAO COMPOUND.
  - (G) 291512H APR FIRST FLIGHT OF AIRCRAFT OUT OF ZONE WITH EVACUEES.
  - (H) 291700H APR EMBASSY NOTIFIES THAT APPROXIMATELY 2000 EVACUEES ARE LOCATED THERE. SPARROW HAWK LAUNCHED TO EMBASSY.
  - (I) 291900H APR ELEMENTS OF GSF HELO LIFTED FROM DAO TO EMBASSY TO INCREASE SUPPORT.
  - (J) 292107H APR CH-46 CRASHES AT SEA. TWO PILOTS LOST AT SEA, TWO CREW MEMBERS RECOVERED.
  - (L) 300012H APR LAST OF GSF EXTRACTED FROM DAO COMPOUND.
  - (K) 300010H APR AH-1J DITCHED AT SEA DUE TO FUEL EXHAUSTION. BOTH CREW MEMBERS RECOVERED.
  - (M) 300458H APR ANBASSADOR LIFTED FROM EMBASSY ROOF.
  - (N) 300753H APR LAST GSF LIFTED OFF EMBASSY ROOF.
  - (O) 300835H APR LAST GSF ELEMENTS ON DECK CTF 76 SHIPS. FREQUENT WIND AIR OPERATIONS COMPLETED.
- (3) COMMAND AND CONTROL. THE HELICOPTER ASSETS WERE CONTROLLED BY THE PROV MAG COMMANDING OFFICER FROM THE COMMAND SHIP, USS BLUE RIDGE UTILIZING TACC AFLOAT CAPABILITIES. HDC [HELICOPTER DIRECTION CENTER] GAVE RADAR COVERAGE TO EACH FLIGHT TO THEIR "FEET DRY" ENTRY POINTS AND TURNED OVER CONTROL TO THE AIRBORNE BATTLEFIELD COMMAND AND CONTROL CENTER (ABCCC) IN AN EC-130.

16-H-7

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A MARINE C-130 AIRBORNE DASC WAS ON STATION STANDING BY IN CASE THE ABCCC HAD TO ABORT. FLIGHTS AND WAVES OF AIRCRAFT WERE PROGRAMMED IN AN ORDERLY FLOW BASED ON DESIRED GSF INSERTION BUILDUP REQUIREMENTS OF THE GSF COMMANDERS. THIS HELO FLOW PLAN, DRAFTED BY PROV-MAG, WAS INCORPORATED INTO CTF 76 AND CTG 79.1 OPLANS TO COVER THE HELICOPTER EVACUATION OF DESIGNATED PERSONNEL AND INSERTION AND EXTRACTION OF GSF ELEMENTS. NO REQUIREMENTS FOR EXTRACTION OF EVACUEES FROM THE EMBASSY OTHER THAN THE AMBASSADOR AND THE EMBASSY MARINES PLUS A SMALL NUMBER OF AMERICAN CITIZENS WAS ADDRESSED IN PLANNING INFORMATION FROM HIGHER HEAD-QUARTERS. WHEN THE MISSION REQUIRED THE ADDITIONAL TASK OF LIFTING OUT SUCH A LARGE NUMBER OF EVACUEES, THE INTEGRITY OF FLIGHTS WAS BROKEN DOWN DUE TO A ONE PLANE LANDING ZONE. THIS CAUSED A CHANGE IN HELO FLOW. THE "DAISY CHAIN" OR CONTINUOUS STREAM OF SINGLE CH-53 AND CH-46 RESULTED. WITH DARKNESS AND BAD WEATHER AND AAA THE DAISY CHAIN WAS USED FOR ALL ZONES.

(4) STATISTICS	CH-53	CH-46	AH-1J	UH-1E	TOTAL
(A) TOTAL FLIGHT HOURS	313.4	206.1	34.1	6.1	560.0
(B) TOTAL DAY SORTIES EVAC/GSF	172/25	90/12	20	3	322
(C) TOTAL NIGHT SORTIES EVAC/GSF	140/22	128/32	27	11	360
(D) TOTAL SORTIES 29-30 APRIL EVAC/GSF	312/47	218/44	47	14	682
(E) AMMO EXPENDED	0	0	0	0	0
(F) ALE 29 FLARES EXPENDED	50	4	0	0	
(G) TOTAL GSF INSERTED	865	0	0	0	
(H) TOTAL GSF EXTRACTED BY PROMAG	618	171	0	0	
(I) TOTAL GSF EXTRACTED BY USAF	76	0	0	0	
(J) TOTAL AMCITS/TCN/VN EVACUATED	4788	2180	0	0	

16-H-8

# SECRET

# SECRET

## (K) SORTIES BY TYPE MISSION

(1) GSF INSERT/EXTRACT	47	7	0	0
(2) EVAC	(-----GARBLE-----)			
(3) MEDEVAC	0	18	0	0
(4) SAR	0	18	0	0
(5) HELO ESCORT	0	0	47	0
(6) COMMAND AND CONTROL	0	0	0	#14
(7) SPARROW HAWK	0	8	0	0

## (L) SIGNIFICANT FLYING HOUR STATISTICS FOR OPERATION "FREQUENT WIND"

(1) TOTAL HELO CREW HOURS	1054.0
(2) MAX CREW DAY (CH-46) IN HOURS	22.5
(3) AVERAGE CREW DAY IN HOURS	13.0

## D. LOGISTICS SUMMARY

(1) THE BRIGADE LOGISTIC SUPPORT GROUP PROVIDED SUPPORT TO THE GROUND SECURITY FORCE, THE AVIATION ELEMENT, AMPHIBIOUS EVACUATION SECURITY FORCE, AND TO THE MSC SHIPS FOR AIDING THE EVACUEES.

(2) PRIOR TO EXECUTION, THE BLSG PROVIDED GLOVES AND HAMMERS TO THE GSF ADVANCE PARTY FOR IMPROVING PERIMETER DEFENSE AT THE DAO COMPOUND. ELECTRIC BLASTING CAPS, ELECTRIC SQUIBS, GALVANOMETERS, THERMITE GRENADES AND C-4 CHARGES WERE FURNISHED THE BLSG EOD TEAM WHO WERE PREPARING THE DAO COMPOUND AND GENERAL WESTMORELAND'S HOUSE FOR DESTRUCTION.

(3) DURING THE OPERATION, RIOT CONTROL AGENTS WERE PROVIDED TO RLT-4 FOR USE DURING THE EXTRACTION OF EVACUEES, IF NECESSARY. ILLUMINATING FLARES WERE PROVIDED THE PROV-MAG-39 IN ORDER TO ENSURE ADEQUATE LIGHTS IN THE LANDING ZONES AT THE DAO COMPOUND AND THE AMERICAN EMBASSY DURING NIGHT OPERATIONS.

16-H-9

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(4) THE BLSG PROVIDED THE MSC SHIPS SECURITY DETACHMENT (AESF) WITH MCI'S, HEAT TABLETS, AND MEDICAL ITEMS TO SUSTAIN THE DETACHMENT AND REFUGEES DURING EXTENDED PERIODS FROM REFUGEE RECEPTION UNTIL ARRIVAL AT SAFE HAVENS.

(5) AFTER THE OPERATION, MILITARY CLOTHING WAS FURNISHED TO MARINES WHO WERE FORCED TO LEAVE THEIR UNIFORMS IN SAIGON. (EMBASSY MARINES)

(6) IN THE EVENT THAT THE OPERATION EXTENDED BEYOND THE PLANNED TIME FRAME, SAFETY STOCKS OF WATER, FOOD AMMUNITION, BATTERIES AND CONCERTINA WERE TO BE FORMED AND STAGED IN COMPANY AND BATTALION SIZE BLOCKS BY THE BLSG.

## E. AMPHIBIOUS EVACUATION SECURITY FORCES OPERATIONS SUMMARY.

EIGHT 54-MAN EVACUEE CONTROL AND SHIP'S SECURITY DETACHMENTS HAVE BEEN POSTED TO MSC SHIPS TO DATE. THESE DETACHMENTS WILL ACCOMPANY REFUGEES TO SAFE HAVENS AND RETURN TO PARENT COMMANDS UPON TERMINATION OF DUTIES AND UPON RELEASE FROM TF 76 TO WHOM THEY HAVE BEEN CHOPPED OFFCOM. SIX 54 MAN DETACHMENT REMAIN AVAILABLE FOR POSTING AS REQUIRED.

## 3. (S) LESSONS LEARNED.

### A. ITEM: LIAISON AND COORDINATION BETWEEN AIR FORCE AND NAVY/MARINE CORPS.

(1) DISCUSSION. DURING THE PLANNING PHASE, MANY PROBLEMS SURFACED IN MATTERS OF PROCEDURES, ORDNANCE, MISSION CLEARANCE AND CONTROL AND COMMUNICATIONS. OBTAINING TIMELY SOLUTIONS WAS A DIFFICULT TASK.

(2) RECOMMENDATION. THAT ON FUTURE JOINT OPERATION A LIAISON OFFICER OR TEAM FROM OTHER SERVICES BE ADDED TO MAB/GSF HEADQUARTERS TO ASSIST IN COORDINATION BETWEEN THE SERVICES INVOLVED.

### B. ITEM: COMMAND POST (FORWARD).

(1) DISCUSSION. BASED ON AUTHORITY FROM JCS, A FIVE MAN GSF ADVANCE COMMAND ELEMENT WAS POSTED TO SAIGON

16-H-10

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TO ASSIST IN THE PLANNING AND CONDUCT OF OPERATION "FREQUENT WIND". THE GROUP WAS COMPRISED OF THE DEPUTY COMMANDER, A COMMUNICATIONS-ELECTRONICS OFFICER, NAVAL AVIATOR AND EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE DISPOSAL PERSONNEL. THIS ELEMENT CREW PRIOR TO OPERATION EXECUTION, TO INCLUDE ADDITIONAL NAVAL AVIATORS, HLZ CONTROL TEAMS, AND COMMUNICATORS. THIS FACILITATED LIAISON WITH THE EMBASSY, DAO, EMERGENCY CONTROL CENTER, MARSHALLING TEAMS, AIR AMERICA AND SIGNIFICANTLY ENHANCED THE PROBABILITIES FOR A SUCCESSFUL OPERATION. SOME MAJOR AREAS OF COORDINATION WERE:

- (A) RECOMMENDATION AND PREPARATION OF HELICOPTER LANDING ZONES AND SITES;
- (B) SELECTION, INSTALLATION AND TESTING OF COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT;
- (C) EOD EFFORTS IN SUPPORT OF DAO (NO CAPABILITY PREVIOUSLY EXISTED);
- (D) LIAISON VISITS TO CG, 9TH MAB AND STAFF ABOARD USS BLUE RIDGE;
- (E) BRIEFINGS FOR EMBASSY AND DAO PERSONNEL;
- (F) LOGISTICS AND ADMIN SUPPORT OF 9TH MAB AUGMENTATION TO EMBASSY SECURITY ELEMENT;
- (G) ENSURING A COMPLEMENTARY ROLE WITH EMBASSY AND DAO PERSONNEL SLATED FOR A ROLE IN NEMVAC OPERATIONS;
- (H) DISPOSITION OF AN/TSC 54 EMPLACED AT DAO;
- (I) ESTABLISHING A MOBILE COMMAND POST;
- (J) MOVEMENT OF VEHICLES OUT OF DAO COMPOUND FOLLOWING IMPLEMENTATION ORDER;
- (K) MAINTAINING STATUS OF HELO EVACUEES (AMERICAN AND OTHER NATIONALS);
- (L) ATTEMPTS TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN SAIGON AND USS BLUE RIDGE;
- (M) BEING ADVISED ON SECURITY MEASURES REQUIRED FOLLOWING ORDERS TO IMPLEMENT AND PRIOR TO ARRIVAL OF GSF (MAXIMUM SECURITY DANGER PERIOD);

16-H-11

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(N) PREPARATION OF SLIDES, PHOTOS AND DIAGRAMS OF INGRESS TO AND EGRESS FROM DAO COMPOUND, SAIGON, FOR USE BY 9TH MAB AVIATION ELEMENTS;

(O) LATERAL PLANNING AND SURVEY OF LZ'S AND APPROACH ROUTES TO NEWPORT AND U. S. EMBASSY.

(2) RECOMMENDATION. IN FUTURE EVACUATION OPERATIONS, PROVIDE SIMILAR ADVANCE, ON SITE, REPRESENTATION BY THE COMMAND TO EXECUTE PLANS.

## C. ITEM: EVACUEE PLANNING

(1) DISCUSSION. THE MAJOR PROBLEM AREA ENCOUNTERED BY THE ADVANCE COMMAND ELEMENT WAS COORDINATION WITH THE EMBASSY IN ASCERTAINING BOTH NUMBERS OF AMERICANS AND NUMBERS OF VIETNAMESE TO BE EVACUATED. THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF AMERICANS VARIED WIDELY (1,500-5,000) AND VIETNAMESE FIGURES WERE CONSISTENTLY LESS PRECISE. ADDITIONALLY, NO REALLY VIABLE NOTIFICATION PLAN TO EVACUEES OR SCHEME TO MOVE THEM TO DAO WAS UNDERTAKEN UNTIL THE LAST POSSIBLE MOMENT. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT DAO TOOK WHATEVER ACTION WAS WITHIN THEIR MEANS TO OFFSET THE LATTER DEFICIENCY, AND THAT THEY WERE SUCCESSFUL TO THE MAXIMUM POSSIBLE DEGREE. THE FINAL MESHOT OF THIS PLANNING SHORTFALL WAS THE HUGE, UNEXPECTED, AND EVER SWELLING NUMBER OF EVACUEES AT THE EMBASSY, AS OPPOSED TO DAO WHERE ORDERLY PROCESSING AND EVACUATION WAS POSSIBLE.

(2) RECOMMENDATION. IN OPERATIONS OF THIS SCOPE GIVE RESPONSIBLE MILITARY PERSONNEL AUTHORITY TO PARTICIPATE IN PLANNING AND EXECUTION.

## D. ITEM: PRE-EXECUTION ENVIRONMENT

(1) DISCUSSION. THE "BUSINESS AS USUAL" ATTITUDE AT THE DAO WAS AN AREA OF CONCERN. IT WAS DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN PERMISSION TO ACCOMPLISH SUCH MUNDANE THINGS AS DISMANTLING TENNIS COURT, FENCES AND DESTROYING BUILDINGS WHICH WERE IMPEDIMENTS TO PLANNED HLZ'S. THE DAO SIMPLY HAD NO COMMAND STRUCTURE DESIGNED TO PERMIT ORDERLY PLANNING AND EXECUTION OF ANY SUCH OPERATION AS "FREQUENT WIND". AS AN EXAMPLE, INDIVIDUALS IDENTIFIED AS CRITICAL TO THE CONDUCT OF NEMVAC OPERATIONS WERE CONSISTENTLY PLACED ON FLIGHTS OUT OF SOUTH VIETNAM, DAYS PRIOR TO THE 29TH. THESE INCLUDED BUS DRIVERS, CRITICAL ENGINEERING PERSONNEL, AND THE

16-H-12

# SECRET

# SECRET

LIKE. ONCE THE FIXED WING VIETNAM EVACUATION RESPONSIBILITY WAS THRUST UPON THE DAO, ORGANIZATION BECAME VIRTUALLY PARALYZED, AND WITHOUT THE EXTRACURRICULAR EFFORTS OF A SMALL NUMBER OF OFFICERS, COULD NOT HAVE CARRIED OUT THEIR NEMVAC RESPONSIBILITIES. THE FACT THAT THEY DID IS A DISTINCT CREDIT TO THOSE CONCERNED.

(2) RECOMMENDATIONS. PROVIDED SUCH A REQUIREMENT SHOULD RE-OCCUR, A STAFF DESIGNED TO SUPPORT AND CARRY OUT NEMVAC OPERATIONS SHOULD BE FORMED AND EXERCISED REGULARLY IN ALL PHASES OF SUCH OPERATIONS.

## E. ITEM: INTEGRATION OF COMMAND AND CONTROL (INTERNAL)

(1) DISCUSSION. DURING OPERATION "FREQUENT WIND", THE CLOSE INTEGRATION OF COMMAND AND CONTROL ON SCENE AT BOTH THE MAB AND RLT LEVELS WITH ONLY A SMALL STAFF ON SCENE WHICH WAS TOTALLY OPERATIONALLY DOMINATED PROVED TO BE A VALUABLE ASSET. NORMAL STAFFING PROCEDURES WERE NOT EMPLOYED SINCE AIR SUPPORT, EVACUATION PROCESSING AND CONTROL AND THE SECURITY PLAN HAD TO BE IMMEDIATELY RESPONSIVE AND VERY CLOSELY INTEGRATED DUE TO THE FLUID SITUATION IN THE EVACUATION OBJECTIVE AREA (EOA). AGAIN, DURING THE TRANSITION OF COMMAND AND CONTROL ASHORE FROM THE MAB TO THE RLT, THIS REINFORCED THE AFOREMENTIONED OBSERVATION AND NO SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS OCCURRED.

(2) RECOMMENDATIONS. THAT IN FUTURE EVACUATION OPERATION

(A) ONLY ESSENTIAL STAFF MEMBERS BE INTRODUCED INTO AN OPERATION OF THIS TYPE, AND

(B) COMMAND AND CONTROL OF ALL HEADQUARTERS BE CLOSELY INTEGRATED TO PRECLUDE PROBLEMS OCCURRING DURING TRANSITION FROM SENIOR TO SUBORDINATE HEADQUARTERS.

## F. ITEM: OPERATIONAL CONTROL OF AIR FORCE HELICOPTERS.

(1) DISCUSSION. IN A FAST MOVING, FLUID SITUATION, ALL HELOS INVOLVED MUST COME UNDER THE SENIOR AVIATION UNIT SO THAT EFFECTIVE SCHEDULING AND PROPER UTILIZATION OF ASSETS CAN BE PROGRAMMED. IN FREQUENT WIND, THE AIR FORCE HELOS WERE NOT ASSIGNED TO THE OPERATIONAL CONTROL OF PROV MAG-39. SPECIFICALLY, THE AIR FORCE UNIT ASSIGNED WAS STATIONED ABOARD A CVA WHICH WAS TEMPORARILY ASSIGNED TO TASK FORCE 76. THE AIR FORCE UNIT REMAINED OPCON TO THE AIR FORCE. CONSEQUENTLY, QUESTIONS AND RECOMMENDED CHANGES WERE SUBMITTED BY THE AIR FORCE UNIT DIRECTLY TO COMMUSAG/7AF; THESE QUERIES THEN WERE PASSED TO CTF-76 WHO IN TURN RE-DIRECTED THEM TO CTG 79.1 AND PROV MAG-39 FOR RESOLUTION.

16-H-13

# SECRET

# SECRET

THIS TIME CONSUMING AND INDIRECT ROUTE CREATED CONSIDERABLE CONFUSION RIGHT DOWN TO THE LAST MINUTE.

(2) RECOMMENDATION. THAT ALL HELO UNITS ASSIGNED BE UNDER THE OPERATIONAL CONTROL OF THE SENIOR AVIATION UNIT WHOM THEY ARE TASKED TO ASSIST. (PROVMAG-39 IN THE CASE OF "FREQUENT WIND").

## G. ITEM: RADIO NETS

(1) DISCUSSION. IN ORDER TO COORDINATE GSF AND HELO REQUIREMENTS BETWEEN THE GSF COMMANDER AND HIS REAR ECHELON, A RELIABLE, SECURE RADIO NET IS REQUIRED FROM THE FLAGSHIP TO EACH LZ CONTROL (IN THIS CASE DAO COMPOUND, ANNEX, AND EMBASSY LZ). IN OPERATION "FREQUENT WIND", THESE NETS WERE AVAILABLE THROUGH RADIO RELAY FROM THE AIRBORNE BATTLEFIELD COMMAND AND CONTROL CENTER (ABCCC). EACH TIME THESE NETS WERE USED BY THE MARINE COMMAND CENTER REAR ECHELON, AN ORDER TO STAY OFF THE OPERATIONAL FREQUENCY WAS RECEIVED FROM HIGHER HEADQUARTERS.

(2) RECOMMENDATION. THAT A HF RADIO NET (PREFERABLY SECURE) BE DEDICATED TO THE GSF COMMANDER AND HIS REAR ECHELON.

## H. ITEM: DIFFICULTY IN COMMUNICATIONS TO AND FROM USS BLUE RIDGE (LCC-19).

(1) DISCUSSION. COMMUNICATION CIRCUITS ALLOCATED FOR USE BY EMBARKED MARINE COMMAND GROUPS WERE UNRELIABLE, BOTH BEFORE AND DURING THE OPERATION. THE COORDINATION CIRCUIT (VOICE) LINKING SHIPS WITH EMBARKED MARINES WAS DESPERATELY NEEDED, BUT REMAINED INOPERATIVE AN ESTIMATED 70 PERCENT OF THE TIME. THIS RESULTED IN INTRODUCING WRITTEN MESSAGES INTO AN ALREADY OVERBURDENED COMMUNICATIONS CENTER. IN MANY CASES, MARINE PORTABLE EQUIPMENT WAS MORE EFFECTIVE THAN BLUE RIDGE INSTALLED EQUIPMENT.

(2) RECOMMENDATIONS.

(A) THAT ALL TROOP COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS BE THOROUGHLY CHECKED BY QUALIFIED PERSONNEL AND FAULTS BE CORRECTED.

(B) THAT RADIO TRANSMITTERS (UHF) BE PROPERLY TUNED TO PERMIT MAXIMUM WATTAGE OUTPUT.

16-H-14

# SECRET

# SECRET

(C) THAT EMBARKED TROOP COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS BE CONSIDERED ON AN EQUAL BASIS WITH SHIP REQUIREMENTS.

I. ITEM: MOTOROLA RADIO SETS, PT-300.

(1) DISCUSSION. THE SMALL HAND CARRIED PT-300 PROVED TO BE A RELIABLE PIECE OF COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT. ALTHOUGH NOT AVAILABLE AS MARINE ORGANIC EQUIPMENT, THEY WERE AVAILABLE IN QUANTITY WITHIN THE DAO COMPOUND. MOST WERE CAPABLE OF OPERATING ON FOUR DIFFERENT NETS. THEY WERE USED TO LINK SECURITY POST TO GUARD OFFICE AND KEY PERSONNEL, FOR LANDING ZONE CONTROLLERS TO MARSHALLING AREAS, COMMANDERS TO THE COMMAND CENTER, ETC. TRANSMISSION RANGE WAS GREAT AND AT ONE POINT, THE PT-300 WAS THE ONLY PORTABLE RADIO LINK TO THE EMBASSY, SOME THREE MILES DISTANT. EQUIPPED WITH A RECHARGEABLE BATTERY AND BUILT IN CHARGER, THE SET IS VERY ECONOMICAL TO OPERATE.

(2) RECOMMENDATION. THAT THE MARINE CORPS CONSIDER PURCHASING PT 300'S AND HOLD THEM AT THE PROPER LEVEL FOR SIMILAR OPERATIONS (RIOTS, DEMONSTRATIONS, ETC).

J. ITEM: LF/ADF HOMERS.

(1) DISCUSSION. MARINE HELICOPTERS HAVE LF/ADF COMM-NAV RADIO EQUIPMENT WHICH IS MORE REPLIABLE FOR LOW LEVEL HELO NAVIGATION THAN UHF/ADF. IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT LF/ADF IS BEING REMOVED FROM MOST AVIATION SHIPS AND BEING REPLACED WITH UHF/ADF HOMING EQUIPMENT.

(2) RECOMMENDATION. THAT ALL AVIATION AND NON-AVIATION SHIPS THAT HAVE HELD DECKS MAINTAIN LF/ADF HOMERS FOR USE IN AMPHIBIOUS OPERATIONS.

K. ITEM: HELO ESCORT

(1) DISCUSSION. THERE WERE NO FIXED WING AIRCRAFT DEDICATED TO HELICOPTER ESCORT ALONG THE 40NM APPROACH AND RETIREMENT ROUTES. AH-1J (COBRA GUNSHIPS) ESCORTED THE HELO FLIGHTS ALONG THESE ROUTES AND WERE CAPABLE OF PROVIDING FIRE SUPPRESSION WITH ONLY 20MM GUNS AND MARKING OF TARGETS WITH 2.75 WHITE PHOSPHORUS ROCKETS.

(2) RECOMMENDATION. THAT FIXED WING AIRCRAFT LOADED WITH PIN-POINT FIRING WEAPONS/MUNITIONS BE DEDICATED TO HELO ESCORT IN FUTURE OPERATIONS OF THIS NATURE.

16-H-15

# SECRET

# SECRET

## L. ITEM: CONTROL OF HELICOPTER ASSETS.

(1) DISCUSSION. THE BRIGADE AVIATION ELEMENT (PROV-MA: -39) HELICOPTERS WERE EMBARKED IN FIVE SEPARATE SHIPS DURING THIS OPERATION. TO COORDINATE DAILY SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS FROM ONE POINT REQUIRES AN EFFECTIVE SYSTEM OF VOICE COMMUNICATION WHICH DUE TO LIMITED CIRCUITS ON RESPECTIVE SHIPS WAS NOT ESTABLISHED. A UHF FREQUENCY WAS ASSIGNED; HOWEVER, DISTANCE BETWEEN SHIPS OFTEN PRECLUDED THIS FROM BEING A RELIABLE MEANS OF CONTACT. THE ALTERNATE METHOD WAS TO UTILIZE TELETYPE CIRCUITS; HOWEVER, AS THE ALERT CONDITIONS ESCALATED, MESSAGE TRAFFIC BOGGED DOWN TO THE POINT THAT SOME OPERATIONAL IMMEDIATE TRAFFIC REQUIRED EIGHT HOURS FROM RELEASE TO RECEIPT BY TASKED UNITS. THIS TIME LAG FREQUENTLY DID NOT ALLOW AIR GROUPS TO RESPOND TO CHANGES IN AIRCRAFT FRAGS OR SUFFICIENTLY REACT TO URGENT NEW REQUESTS.

(2) RECOMMENDATION. UPON EMBARKATION OF HELICOPTER ASSETS ON CONVOY SHIPS, ALLOCATE A LONG RANGE VOICE COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITY FOR USE BY THE SENIOR AVIATION COMMAND FOR PURPOSES OF CONTROLLING HIS ASSETS AND THEREBY RENDERING MORE EXPEDITIOUS SUPPORT.

## M. ITEM: CONTINUOUS OPERATION OF HELOS FROM NON-AVIATION SHIPS.

(1) DISCUSSION. THERE IS A PROPENSITY TO OPERATE HELOS FROM NON-AVIATION SHIPS FOR PROLONGED PERIODS. OPERATION FREQUENT WIND WAS NO EXCEPTION TO THIS GENERAL OBSERVATION. SUCH SHIPS LACK THE NECESSARY FACILITIES REQUIRED TO SUPPORT HELO OPERATIONS; THEY LACK SHOP SPACE, GROUND SUPPORT EQUIPMENT, AVGAS, AND SOME AVIATION COMMUNICATIONS PROCEDURES AND EQUIPMENT, ALL OF WHICH IMPACTS SEVERELY ON THE SAFETY AND MAINTENANCE ASPECTS OF OPERATIONAL FLYING.

(2) RECOMMENDATION. DO NOT OPERATE AIRCRAFT FROM NON-AVIATION SHIPS FOR PROLONGED PERIODS.

## N. ITEM: TACTICAL SPREAD LOADING OF UNITS IN TASK FORCE SHIPPING.

(1) DISCUSSION. AVAILABLE TASK FORCE SHIPPING WAS ASSIGNED HASTILY AS A RESULT OF THE RAPIDLY ESCALATING CONTINGENCY IN SOUTH VIETNAM. AS A RESULT, TROOPS AND EQUIPMENT WERE EMBARKED ON SHIPS WHERE AND WHEN AVAILABLE THUS PRECLUDING DESIRABLE EMBARKATION PLANNING. TO ADJUST FROM THIS POSTURE TO ONE IN WHICH OPTIMUM UNIT INTEGRITY MIGHT BE GAINED,

16-H-16

# SECRET

# SECRET

PRIOR TO COMMITMENT TO COMBAT, A SERIES OF CROSS-DECKING MOVES OF PERSONNEL WAS REQUIRED PRIOR TO L-HOUR; HOWEVER, IT COULD NOT BE DONE IN ADVANCE OF D-DAY DUE TO BERTHING/EQUIPMENT STOWAGE LIMITATIONS ABOARD SHIPS. THIS PROMPTED A NEED FOR PRE L-HOUR HELO-LIFTS AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF ACTIONS TO BE ACCOMPLISHED AFTER RECEIPT OF AN EXECUTE MESSAGE AND PRIOR TO L-HOUR MINUS TIME OF FLIGHT TO THE EVACUATION OBJECTIVE AREA.

(2) RECOMMENDATION. THAT IN CONTINGENCIES WHERE PROPER SPREAD LOADING OF UNITS HAS NOT BEEN POSSIBLE, L-HOUR BE ANNOUNCED AS FAR IN ADVANCE AS POSSIBLE AND NOT LATER THAN AN AMOUNT OF TIME BEFORE L-HOUR EQUAL TO THE TIME OF FLIGHT TO THE OBJECTIVE AREA PLUS THE TIME REQUIRED TO CONDUCT PERSONNEL/EQUIPMENT REDISTRIBUTION AND AIRCRAFT PREPARATION.

## O. ITEM: INTELLIGENCE SUPPORT.

(1) DISCUSSION. ALTHOUGH INTELLIGENCE SUPPORT IN RESPONSE TO EEI'S WAS FAIRLY RESPONSIVE DURING THE LATTER DAYS OF THE OPERATION, THE EARLIER STAGES OF THE OPERATION WERE PLAGUED WITH UNANSWERED REQUESTS FOR PHOTO COVERAGE, IMMEDIATE PHOTO INTERPRETATION REPORTS (IPIR'S) REQUESTED FROM COMSEVENTHFLT.

(2) RECOMMENDATION. THAT A GREATER EFFORT BE MADE TO PROVIDE MORE RESPONSIBLE SUPPORT TO COMMITTED FORCES."

3. (FOUO) ONE FINAL LOOK. The last elements of the 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade withdrew from the Defense Attache Office compound about midnight on 29 April 1975. Among the last of those to leave were US Marine explosive ordnance disposal specialists who ignited prepositioned incendiary devices in Building 5000, the Defense Attache's headquarters. The three photographs which follow page 16-H-18 record the handiwork of those marines; a tragic final comment on US involvement in Vietnam.

16-H-17

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16-H-18

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16-H-19

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**8**